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TURNS ABOUT TOWN

ROBERT CORTES HOLLIDAY

By ROBERT CORTES HOLLIDAY

TURNS ABOUT TOWN

MEN AND BOOKS AND CITIES

BROOME STREET STRAWS

WALKING-STICK PAPERS

PEEPS AT PEOPLE

BOOTH TARKINGTON

THE MEMOIR TO:
JOYCE KILMER: POEMS
ESSAYS AND LETTERS

TURNS ABOUT TOWN

BY

ROBERT CORTES HOLLIDAY

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GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

28555A

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CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING

THE

DEDICATION

OF THIS BOOK

TO

JOHN BUNKER, ESQ^RE

The Players,
16 Gramercy Park,
New York City,
June 10, 1921.

DEAR JOHN:

I am, with your permission, dedicating to you a new book of mine—that is, on condition that you help me read the proofs. The book is to be called "Turns About Town." It will be published sometime this autumn.

Ever yours,
BOB.

To: John Bunker, Esq^re

New York,
521 West 148th Street,
June 12, 1921.

DEAR BOB:

You can't intimidate me by any such threat.. On the contrary, I think I shall be secretly (and tremendously) pleased. As for the proofs, all I have to say is (in the words of the stage villain), "Produce your proofs!"

Always, dear Bob,
Sincerely yours,
JOHN.

To: Robert Cortes Holliday, Esq^re

FOREWORD

More than half of these pieces were syndicated in a number of American newspapers by The Central Press Association of New York. Several others of them originally appeared in *The Bookman.* "Literary Lives" has been amplified since it was written for the New York *Times* as a review of the "Dictionary of National Biography," Second Supplement, Volumes II and III. "Only She Was There" and "Former Tenant of His Room" are reprinted from the New York *Evening Post.* "The Sexless Camera" was contributed to a magazine called *The International.* "I Know an Editor" was written at the invitation of a gentleman whose name I cannot recall, and whether or not he ever used it in whatever publication it was with which he was connected I do not know.

I thank all these friends of mine for permitting me to here reprint these articles.

R. C. H.

New York, 1921.

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TURNS ABOUT TOWN

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CHAPTER I

THE HOTEL GUEST

SOME people just go to a hotel (sometimes referred to as "an hotel") and stay awhile and go away again. And think nothing about the matter.

Of course, some may complain more or less at the place about the "service." Or swank round outside about the address, saying carelessly: "Oh! yes: at the Blackstone, you know." Or again, if it's a rather inexpensive place, remark to friends: "Isn't it a funny hole! But the cuisine is excellent. You'd be surprised! That's why I stop there. And then it's much more homey, too, than those garish places."

Now I myself am a fan for hotels.

If I was a rich man I'd do like an aristocratic and restless young man I know, who used to go

to one New York hotel about twelve at night (after the evening's entertainment) and leave a call for ten in the morning, when he would get up and drive to another hotel, check in, eat lunch and dinner there, and move on to a third New York hotel that night. A cheerful way he had of adding variety to his life.

He was a highly agreeable youth, this chap. Always "wore" a silver-headed cane. I'm sorry to have to say that he is now in jail. Yep! You see, he had many attractive qualities, but dependability was not a feature of his equipment. However, his is a resilient nature, and, fortunately, he is an epicure by temperament. I was rather distressed, myself, when I heard that he was in jail; and other of his friends that I met also were decidedly disturbed about him. One day one of them got a letter from him (it was in France, you know, that he was then in jail), a bubbling, delightful letter (just like the youth), in which he declared with much gusto that the jail he was in had the best menu of any jail in France.

But about hotels. Oh, yes!

I always like those huge, brown-paper laundry bags they have hanging up, pressed beautifully

flat, in the rooms, closets or bathrooms of hotels. You can't roll up your laundry all in one wad and thrust it into one of these bags, because this would tear the bag. The way to do is to put in, for instance, first your collars, then, say, your sox, follow perhaps with your shirts, and so on. In hotels of the very first water, you have observed, a neat little pocket is attached to the outside of the bag, into which you have the fun of pinning your laundry slip, all elaborately made out.

Next thing, of course, is to get your laundry started on its way. And here come up a view of the nice nuances of hotels. You gotta watch your Ps and Qs in these matters or you're likely to get a black-eye at your hotel. All right in a modest sort of place just to holler down the telephone for a boy. Then you say to boy, waving hand toward objects: "Laundry to go down, suit to be pressed, hat to be ironed, shoes to be polished, letters to be mailed," and so forth. Boy gathers up miscellaneous collection of articles and proceeds upon these divers assignments. Presto! Nothing further to detain you.

But suppose you have gone in for a little more class in the matter of your hotel—Statler, or

something like that. Then you find much more of a ritual to life. To accomplish your existence requires thought, a clear head—and time. You pay the penalty of the dignity of pomp and circumstance. No large, off-hand, free and easy manner about sending up a boy. The "operator" knows nothing of boys. In the matter of your laundry you may request her to connect you with the "bell captain," through whose agency (but not otherwise) a boy may be procured. One message. In the matter of your suit you may request to be connected with the "valet service." Message two. And so on.

Then you sit you down and await the procession. Or, if you prefer, contemplate the spectacle of life by looking out at the window.

You fee Buttons. Lapse of time.

Boots (as Dickens calls him) arrives—what probably here is a porter—for shoes. Then you have an excellent opportunity (which may not occur again during the day) for a slight period of philosophical meditation, or to whistle a tune, before the valet appears.

In such places as I am describing it is not etiquette at all (though it may seem to you the simplest way of doing the thing) to call a bell-

boy to get down your bag. The porter does that —and through the correct channel, that is by way of the freight elevator. And, say, something goes wrong with your ice-water pipe. You are not to outrage hotel decency here. What is necessary for you to procure is a waiter. Waiters attend to your inner wants.

I like best the character of valet when he is English (either so by birth, or this by self-cultivation); wears a skirt coat, immaculately pressed, and a "buttonhole"; advances into the room in the attitude of a bow, and comes to a pause in the pose of one listening with deep and profoundly respectful attention to the haughty utterance of a stage earl. Though, indeed, there is an element of disquiet in your being thus elevated to the Peerage if, as with me, the suit you turn over to this unexceptionable servitor is of Hirt, Snuffler and Muss manufacture, and growing a trifle frail in the seat.

The same thing is true of bath-rooms. I don't, of course, mean that bath-rooms perform the valet act. But that the more aristocratic in hotels you get the more likely you are, so to say, to get into hot water in bath-rooms. Like this:

If you get into a bathtub which is not quite the

last word in bathtubs, that is a bathtub which has legs and spigots to turn on the water, you know where you are at all the while. You turn on the hot water in the amount desired. It comes out of the hot water spout. As desired you turn on the cold water. Out of the cold water spout comes it.

But, as you know, the last word in bathtubs is not simple and democratic like that. It is built onto the floor and has a clock-like dial on the wall. Dial marked at different points: "Cold," "Medium," "Hot," "Off." Turn little handle to regulate temperature and flow of water. All out of same pipe. Yes—but—dial untruthful—very. "Off" scalds you; "Medium" freezes you. Bad time trying to take last word in baths.

"Tub or shower?" Maybe you say "shower." And draw one of those police-court cells. Except the door, no opening in the little, square, completely cement room but the small hole in the center of the floor through which the water runs away. But that's not the way to look at it. These little catacomb-like chambers are æsthetic in their ascetic character. You may entertain yourself by fancying that you are St. Jerome, or somebody like that. In here nothing that it

will hurt can get wet, and you can have a fine time making the whole room a merry-go-round of splashes. One disturbing thought may occur to you. If the door should stick you might not be found until the hotel got worried about your bill, when perhaps it would be too late.

Still, I think the chummiest bath-rooms are those with a bay-window; very reprehensible those which have no hooks on which to hang your pajamas and razor strop.

Then there are those hotels so far-seeing into the possibilities of evil chance and so solicitous of your equanimity that they provide your pin cushion with one suspender button. I suppose the thought is to impress you with the idea that nothing for your comfort, even down to the smallest detail, is forgotten. Still, though I do not know that such an untoward incident ever happened, it *is* within the range of human possibility that a man might be shorn of two suspender buttons at once. If, further, the hotel management were co-ordinated with the gentlemen's underwear business a safety pin would be served along with the suspender button—in view of the singular fact that, until your wife has taken a reef in them, all nether garments are

much too great in girth for any figure at all approximating normal.

Working, however, as it does, with human material no hotel can get away with perfection. For, as Dr. Johnson observed, "a fallible being will fail somewhere." It was in San Francisco recently that three days were required for me to recover a suit sent in the morning to be pressed by that afternoon. This mischance was occasioned by three circumstances. To wit: goblins (presumably) made away with the ticket attached to it; the hotel tailor fell indisposed with (I hope) leprosy; and his assistant had a slight mental infirmity, in other words he was seven times an idiot.

Reverse English in Los Angeles a few days later. When one night I found neatly hung on the coat frame in my closet a suit of excellent material, of fashionable design, and seemingly of virgin character. I reported the matter to the third assistant manager. One criticism only I have to make of that suit. It was too confoundedly tight.

Then, of course, even at the best places (I almost think particularly in the best places) you

are likely any time to find under your door in the morning a telephone message stamped "Rush," directing you to call so-and-so "as soon as possible"—and dated 5:17½ two days earlier. Or, on coming in you are handed by the clerk a memorandum which states that Mr. Cohan telephoned. Such matters, you reflect, are retrogressive. If you are unacquainted with any gentleman of the name of Mr. Cohan, so it may very well be that the guest here who *is* a friend of Mr. Cohan received notice that *your* friend Mr. Sloan telephoned. And there you are!

My friend Harry Heartydrop (who, I declare! looks rosier even than before the middle of January, 1920) has adopted a hotel life altogether of late. He explains to me that the advantage of this is the new side-line activity of numerous compassionate bell captains, who, it seems —but that would be telling.

One of the pleasantest things, I think, about hotels is the "night maid service" furnished at fashionable places. When you come in you find your light burning and so do not break your shins, and your bed is "turned down" for you. Very softening to the spirit, this. In a kind of a

sort of a hazy way one's thoughts turn back to the maternal solicitude which used to "tuck" one "in."

Good night!

CHAPTER II

A HUMORIST MISFITS AT A MURDER TRIAL

ARE you in on the great Crime Wave, brother? Almost everybody is, I guess, in one way or another. What's your particular line? Murderer, bandit, burglar, mortally wounded innocent bystander, juror, witness, or victim? The police are in on it, too; every once in awhile one of them gets blackjacked, or something like that.

I had the flu bad enough, when that was the big thing going; but somehow so far I myself have escaped being caught in the Crime Wave. This gives me the great advantage over most people of being a detached spectator of the rollicking game.

I have a friend, though, who was caught up just a few days ago. He has been telling me all about it. Murder case.

This fellow is a sort of author. He had served a time or two as a juror in the Supreme Court

of New York County. In that building down by the City Hall. But he says those cases bored him terribly. They were chicken-feed sort of rows, generally concerned with the question of how many dollars and fractions thereof X had occasioned the loss of to Z by reason of his failure to deliver such and such a quantity of (say) beeswax before the drop in the market of 39.7¼ cents, as called for by telephone agreement, possibly. The "Court" (a nice, pink and grey old fellow) would go to sleep, with his mouth open, during the drone of the legal argument, and be awakened automatically (apparently by some change in atmospheric conditions) at the moment required for him to begin his charge to the jury. Occasionally, he would come semi-to for an instant before this, and indistinctly utter the words, "Objection sustained."

My friend's chief impression of these proceedings is his recollection of one phenomenon which he observed. Not long after the opening of the presentation of X's side of the case he saw very clearly that Z hadn't a leg to stand on. It was ridiculous that he had the face to come into court with an attempt to question the truth of facts which were as apparent to the naked eye

as the Woolworth Building. My friend felt it needless to pay any further attention to the foolish formalities of the argument. If he had not had an uneasy feeling that he might get pinched for this, he would have gone to sleep, like the Judge.

But those were dull days in the jury business.

A little later my friend gets some sort of a ticket instructing him to call and talk things over with a gentleman having the university degree of Commissioner of Jurors. This gentleman asks my friend if he has ever been arrested on a criminal charge, if he is opposed to capital punishment, and if he has any prejudice against Episcopalians. My friend is a man of liberal mind, and replies that he would just as soon hang an Episcopalian as anybody else. "You're on," said the gentleman, reaching for a blotter; and signed him up. My friend didn't know exactly for what. But the gentleman said everything was all right, they might not call on my friend for a long time, and then perhaps it would be a short case.

Sometime back was all this. My friend had almost forgotten about his acquaintance with the Commissioner. Then all of a sudden the gong sounds and the great Crime Wave is on. Detec-

tives dash madly about with shotguns. A jeweller is shot every day after lunch and a subway ticket-seller is robbed directly after every train starts. My friend hurries home early because everybody is fined who is caught on any paved street after dark, and there in his letter-box is the summons from his old friend the Commissioner, who apparently has borne him in mind all this while.

On the document is printed by a printing-press, "Jack Hammond *vs.* The People of the State of New York." And on it is written with a pen my friend's name, before the printed words "Special Juror." It very urgently invites my friend to appear at ten o'clock four days distant at the Criminal Courts Building and there "await further order of the Court."

You get off the subway at Brooklyn Bridge, you know, and go, past the Municipal Building, up Centre Street. A district around behind the "lanes" (as they say of steamship travel) of general traffic, and one infrequently traversed by my friend. He was much interested in the spectacle hereabout. Buildings labelled Public Health on this hand, buildings labelled Public Records on that. Then you come to that prison

as gruesome in its name as the Tower of London is romantic in its connotation—the Tombs. The structure itself, a cluster of rather slender wings, rises from behind its dark walls with an element of grace, in contrast to that chill, squat, mouldering pile which begot and bequeathed the historic name. Ugh! though, those barred windows, row upon row, give a fellow such qualms as do the ugly symbols of our mortality. Even though you ain't done nothin', make you feel sorta faint like inside!

There in the south wall is a little door, like a rabbit burrow, with a little group about it, and quite a small bustle going on. Standing in this bit of a doorway, as though she had something to do in the way of belonging there, is a queer, oval body who looks much as though she might be what is called an "apple woman." Marked "Visitors' Entrance," this door. What is it all the people on this side of the street are pausing to look at over there?

A cab is drawn up. From this lightly steps (or flashes) a dizzy dream. "Floppy" hat, scant skirt awhirl, pink-hued stockings gleaming to the height of the full curve behind the knee, tall satin pump-heels dancing the wearer on her toes

—she swirls through the dark doorway. "They all have their wimmin," remarks a blousy-looking loiterer to my friend.

At the north, three stories up, the prison connects with the courts building by that fabled structure the "bridge of sighs."

Lively scene before the main entrance to this edifice on Centre Street. Streams of figures hurrying up the broad front steps—on their way to a busy day at the height of the crime season. Taxis flying up and discharging chattering groups as at a theatre. Open pops a taxi door, out leap three. A couple of very hard-looking young men, of that sawed-off, stocky stature frequently observed in this type of very hard-looking young man. Elegantly dressed, these; between them one of "Oh!-you-beautiful-doll" type. Rapidly they make their way up the steps, as though very well acquainted with the place.

Regular jam inside. My friend learned from an attendant that his particular destination was two flights up. Great crush wedging into the elevator. Elevator man calls out merrily to an acquaintance he observes outside his door: "It's a great life if you don't weaken!"

Threads his way, my friend, around the bal-

cony, so to say, upstairs. Centre of building open from ground floor to roof. Effect: spacious, beautiful, ornamented in the richness of a house of grand opera. Finds the right door. Card on the wall nearby. Several persons (tough-looking youths in caps and soft collars) reading it. It lists previous day's proceedings in this court room. Says: So-and-so; Murder; Indicted (or something like that). Then the names of attorneys for the defense given. Second line: So-and-so; Murder; etc. Third line: So-and-so; Murder. Fourth line: So-and-so; Grand Larceny. Next line: So-an-so; Rape. Next: Murder. And so on. Sure, my friend thinks, I've got to the real shop this time. He has a few moments yet, and so he strolls over to a door at the opposite side of the building. 'Nother card there. Same sort of thing: murder, murder, grand larceny, homicide, murder, murder. (If you don't believe it, go down there and look at those cards.) "Holy cat!" says my friend to himself, "comparatively little of this crime stuff gets into the papers, after all, don't it? I never heard of any of these cases."

Enters court room. Takes a seat. Room soon filled. Now in my friend's experience as

a petit juror he had found himself among a rather grotesque company of very small characters, frequently somewhat seedy in outward effect. Here he was much struck by the decidedly first-rate quality in appearance of practically every man in the room. Also, before, he had observed with a good deal of annoyance that a court of law could consume about twenty-nine times the time in accomplishing a very simple matter that would be devoted to a thing of similar consequence in any practical business office. Here in this flourishing mill for dealing with capital crime the clerk of the court (or whatever you call him) began to call the roll of jurors present fifteen minutes before the hour set for opening of court. And so did affairs proceed with well-oiled despatch.

"Oyez - mumble - jumble - jabber - jabber - yah - meow - wow - jumble - jabber - jumble" (or whatever the devil it is), sang out the attendant who cries out that. Everybody at once gets to his feet. In comes his corpulent Honor, swinging along briskly, his gown flowing out behind, and mounts to his wooden-canopied throne. A large, glossy, rather handsome face, neatly cropped dark moustache, eye-glasses swinging

from a broad black ribbon. General effect what might be called that of a heavy-weight "club man," looks as if he might be quite a hearty fellow when out with "the boys."

Door opens at back of room. Sound of marching steps. Then are seen coming along through a zoo-like cage round two sides of the room three figures, burly civilian-clothed one in the middle, uniformed officer fore and aft. They line up this side of a rail fencing the jurors off from an area before the Judge. Burly figure is very well dressed. Stands solidly on his feet, eyes trained directly on the Judge. Holds a dark soft hat in his hands which he clasps behind his back. What from a position somewhat to the rear can be seen of the side of his face reveals a heavy scar, the result evidently of a knife slash across one cheek. The Judge puts his palms together and addresses this person. "You are charged with murder," he begins. He says it rather gently, in a somewhat chiding manner, as though he had said, "Bad fellow, bad fellow." Just then, "For the defendant!" calls out an attendant, and another figure hurries forward.

The defendant's attorneys have not appeared, it seems. Their case is not quite prepared. A

postponement is asked. "Why is it not prepared?" asks the Judge. The defendant speaks out. Declares his attorney has not been paid. Judge's reply is that the attorney provided for him is an able man, who will see that all his rights are observed. Grants postponement until the next morning, positively no further. Officer by his side plucks defendant's coat tail, and starts him off back through the cage. As he goes he is heard to say that his attorney will not be there in the morning either.

And as he turns, my friend gets, with a shock, a full-face view of him. He had never expected anybody off the melodramatic stage to *look* so much like a murderer. Scarey, that face, a countenance almost majestic in its ruthlessness and force: gangster, gunman, typically personified.

Jurors excused until ten-thirty next day. As they move toward the door, two attractively dressed young women arise from the rear. "Who are the ladies?" asks one. "Friends of the defendant," says another.

Next day, game called sharp on the stroke of the clock. Following preliminaries of the day before, attendant spins that little roulette wheel

sort of an affair. Looks at slip thus drawn. "John Cole," he cries. Mr. Cole passes round behind jury box, reappears in far corner at left of Judge. "Rigmarole - rigmarole - solemnly swear, rigmarole," chaunts attendant there, thrusting very dilapidated Bible before him. Mr. Cole takes what later will be the witness chair.

Assistant district attorney arises and explains the case to him. The charge is murder in the first degree. The prosecution must rely largely on the testimony of an accomplice.

Defendant sits in whispered consultation with his attorney, his arm almost around him. As prosecutor seats himself, attorney for the defense gets up to put Mr. Cole through his paces. A fat, oily-looking man, with (it is evident) a browbeating manner in reserve.

Has Mr. Cole, or anyone "near and dear" to him, recently met with any "accident" at the hands of robbers? No. He will not, then, have a revengeful feeling toward any person charged with crime? Not at all. Would he give the same weight to the "story" of a "self-confessed thief and murderer" that he would to the testimony of a "man of probity"? Probably not. Now, doubtless, Mr. Cole is a reader of newspapers.

He has, of course, seen this "literature" (with a sneer), this "newspaper hysteria" about a "c-r-i-m-e wave" (tongue in cheek). Well, can Mr. Cole go into the jury box and look at this case detached from the "atmosphere" now "being created by the newspapers"? Finally, is Mr. Cole acquainted with anyone connected with the police department?

Mr. Cole, for some reason, strikes out.

Third man accepted. He comes around from behind it to enter the jury box. At the gateway, while defendant stands and faces him, some more rigmarole-mumble-jumble business.

Suddenly my friend is called. His business? asks district attorney. A writer, he replies. Defendant and his attorney exchange strange glances. Undoubtedly there is something low and suspicious about a fellow with such a business. Attorney for the defense comes forward hurriedly. Soon takes my friend in hand. He at once adopts the sarcastic. My friend's work must require unusual "observation." He must be "gifted" with "great powers of de-duct-shun" (said out of one corner of his mouth). Of course, he has too a "fine imagination." By the

way, what is the nature of his writing? Has he written any novels?

No, my friend says, he is a humorous writer. "A what?" exclaims the lawyer, his mouth remaining open. Then, "Like Don Mark*ee*?" "Somewhat," says my friend. Lawyer visibly pales. Withdrawing toward counsel table, looks back at the accused, who vigorously shakes his head.

"Excused by per-emptory challenge," utters lawyer, dropping into his chair.

CHAPTER III

QUEER THING, 'BOUT UNDERTAKERS' SHOPS

QUEER thing, that, about undertakers' shops! I don't remember to have been struck by undertakers' shops in San Francisco. Maybe they have none there—because, as you'll see, it's a queer thing about them.

Now in Indianapolis undertaking is a very fashionable affair. People there, apparently, want "class" in the matter of being finally disposed of. They believe, evidently, with the author of the popular little idyl, "Urn Burial," that "Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the tomb."

The most aristocratic street in that city is named North Meridian Street. A street, until a short time ago, entirely of stately lawns and patrician homes—mansions. Of late, a little business, shops of the most distinguished character, has been creeping up this street from downtown. Notably, de luxe motor car salesrooms,

studios of highly æsthetic photographers, and particularly palatial undertaking establishments. They are, these last, wondrous halls, which surely none could enter but those who (in life) had been rich in treasure. Features of the city are they—"sights."

But here's the riddle:

Strolling about New York, from river to river, uptown and down, one might readily fancy that here only the poor pass out of the world. Or that if the rich and fashionable ever die their bodies are mysteriously spirited away to destinations unknown; or are secretly preserved (presumably by some taxidermal process) in their homes.

Why? Well, where on Fifth Avenue is an undertaker's? True, a man I know declares there is a single one there. I am unable to find it. Where on any fine street of the metropolis? Why, yes; as a rare phenomenon. You do know, of course, that enormous place on upper Broadway. Sign says branches in Paris, London, Berlin, Petrograd.

Viewed through the great windows interior presents somewhat the effect of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In foreground large harp,

equally huge Chinese vase—probably of the Tang Wang period—on great marble pedestal enormous bronze of a mounted Diana repelling with spear attack of ferocious animal resembling tiger. Appropriateness of this sculpture somewhat puzzling. On wall, somewhat further within, immense tapestry. One door labelled "Delivery Entrance." All of this, of course, is magnificence as much as even the most covetous would crave.

But in New York this august undertaking hall is an anachronism. Here, for some reason mysterious, it is in shabby neighborhoods that the "parlors" of undertakers abound. You may find them sprinkled all about the lower East Side. Frequent on Hudson Street, and, say, on Varick. Quaint and curious places, these. Very human in their appeal. Tiny places, most of them.

One such cozy crib I know on Greenwich Avenue. Has a stained glass screen in the window, suggesting a good deal the style of window ornamentation popular with that American institution lately deceased—the saloon. The social spirit rife in small undertaking shops, at least in some of them, is pleasant to observe. Business there not being pressing, and life moving in

these inns of death in a leisurely and quiet current, neighborly amenities appear to be much cultivated.

This place of which I speak has, particularly in the evenings, much the air of a club, where choice spirits of the locality foregather to discuss politics, it may be, and the more engrossing forms of sport, such as boxing. And perhaps relish a little game at cards. I often pass this place at night and feel a warmth of spirit at the hum of jovial social contact within.

I like, too, the way the undertakers' shops of the humble and obscure carry on cheek by jowl with the familiar, homely, friendly things of life. This gives Death a neighborly sort of air. On my walks in that quarter I always give a friendly glance to the windows of a "Cremation Ass'n" on Eighth Avenue, on one side of it a delicatessen shop, on the other a "loan office," in the basement below a plumber.

Attractive, too, is it to consider how founders of tidy undertaking houses have become personages and are held in revered esteem. For they are not, it would seem, like unto those who have established just ordinary businesses. This I will show you:

TURNS ABOUT TOWN

At a corner of Twenty-third Street, over a telegraph office, is an establishment of some caste. Window legend reads: "Undertakers—Cremations—Night and Day—Interments in all Cemeteries." The last phrase reminds me of the way my old friend James Huneker used to date his letters to me from Brooklyn. They began, "Flatbush by the C—emeteries." But that's not the point. It's a pity the alert English writer who recently visited us and discovered a statue of General Grant in Grant Park, overlooking the Blackstone (where nobody had ever seen one before), and that the huge bust of Washington Irving in Bryant Park, behind the New York Public Library, was an effigy of Father George Washington—it's a rotten shame E. V. Lucas missed this corner while here.

Because when you go round this corner you are to look up just above the level of your head. (Though I'm afraid you neglect to do this.) There on a ledge is a grand sight. It's a bust of God. Fact! Anyhow, looks just like pictures of God William Blake used to make. Old gentleman. Noble brow. Patriarchal beard, flowing out in a pattern of rhythmical waves—most realistically mildewed by time and weather. . . .

But, no; inquiry reveals that it's a likeness of the founder of this "old established" undertaking concern.

Then there's that place a short step down Eighth Avenue. It declares on its sign that it is the "original" house bearing the name of the Reverend gentleman who conducts it. When you look through the glass in the door you view just within, displayed on an ornamental easel, a life-size crayon portrait, enlarged from a photograph, of a distinguished-looking person wearing brown Dundreary whiskers and a top hat. One corner of the portrait is gracefully draped in an American flag.

Yes; you'd be surprised how strong undertakers are on patriotism. Hard by here, next door to a dentist advertising "painless extraction," you find a firm of "Funeral Directors" where conspicuous among such ornaments as tall, bronze lamps with big shades, a spittoon, a little model of a casket and an urn, is a large bronze bust of Abraham Lincoln. A plate says: "No Charge for Rooms or Chapels for Funerals." And above stairs is seen a row of somewhat ecclesiastical stained-glass windows. Though we are

given to understand by an advertisement that the atmosphere of these chapels is "non-sectarian."

Then over on Third Avenue (where there are lots and lots of undertakers) is a place. Always sitting just within the doorway, very silent, a stout, very solemn individual wearing a large, black derby hat and big, round, green-lens spectacles. Above him on the wall a framed lithograph in colors of George Washington—beside it a thermometer. In the window a rubber-plant. Rubber-plants varying in size from infant to elephant are in the windows of all undertakers. The symbolism of this decoration I know not. Beside the plant an infant's white casket, proclaimed by a poster which leans against it to be composed of "purity metal." In some places the casket, perhaps not of purity metal, is protected by being enclosed in a glass case. The name of the proprietor of this shop, as given on his sign, ends in "skey." Set in the door-frame is the usual "Night Bell." And, as always in undertakers' shops, the card of a "notary public" is displayed. Next door "Family Shoes" are featured.

Only yesterday afternoon I was looking in at the window of an undertaker on Second Avenue,

one I had just found. Along the curb before the door a string of rather frayed and wobbly-looking "hacks," with a rusty-black hearse at the head. Horses to these vehicles drowsy in disposition, moth-eaten in effect as to pelt, and in the visibility of their anatomical structure suggesting that they might have been drawn by Albert Dürer in some particularly melancholy mood.

In groups along the edge of the sidewalk, conversing in subdued tones, the Dickensesque drivers of this caravan. Tall and gaunt, some; short and stout, others. Skirt coat on one, "sack" coat on another. Alike in this: frayed and rusty and weather-beaten, all. And hard, very hard of countenance. Each topped by a very tall, and quite cylindrical hat of mussed, shoddy-black, plush texture. Hangovers, so to say, these figures, from New York's hansom-cab days, or the time in London of the "four-wheeler."

No, not altogether. There was something piquant—Villonesque, or jovial—Rabelaisian, about the pickpockets of that tribe. These solemn mummers strike a ghoulish note. But at the same time, out here in the sane and cheerful sun-

light, they don't look real. Create an odd impression. Strikes you as about as queer, this bunch, as if a lot of actors from a melodrama should turn up in the street with their makeup on and gravely pretend to belong to real life.

"Perhaps," I thought, "there is a funeral, or something, going on inside, and I should not be gaping in at this window."

Out of doorway pops little, rotund man, oily countenance. "Are you looking for anybody?" he asks.

"Here," I said inwardly, "is where I get moved on." No, I told him, I was just observing his window.

"Ah!" he cried, immensely flattered. He waved his hand back toward a couple of little, marble crosses with hearts carved in relief on the base. "You don't often see that, do you? Do you, now? They're sixty years old. Made out of a single piece!"

But the saddest thing about undertakers' shops is to go by where was one long familiar to you and find it gone. There was a splendid little place which it was a great consolation to me to admire. That building is now given over to an enterprise called "The Goody Shop." Its lofty

dignity and deep eloquence are gone! It looks like a department store. It is labelled, with the blare of a brass band, "The Home of Pussy Willow Chocolates."

CHAPTER IV

THE HAIR CUT THAT WENT TO MY HEAD

I DID not expect anything in particular when I went in. Though, indeed, it is a very famous place. That is, the hotel is—the Brevoort.

The name itself, Brevoort, is very rich in romantic Knickerbocker associations. Probably you know all about that. Or, possibly, you don't know—or have forgotten. Well, you do know how Broadway curves around there at Tenth Street. That ought to recall Hendrick Brevoort to you. His farm was all about this neighborhood. Caused this kink, he did, so it is said.

This valorous descendant of the old burgher defied the commissioners to destroy his homestead, which lay in the proposed path of Broadway. Or to cut down a favorite tree which blocked the intended course of Eleventh Street. Stood at his threshold with a blunderbuss in his trembling old hands (so the story has it), when the workmen arrived to carry out their instruc-

tions to demolish the house—and carried his point so effectively that Broadway was deflected from its course, while Eleventh Street between Broadway and Fourth Avenue was never completed. Grace Church, which now stands at about where valiant Henry stood that day, was built by a descendant of his, the architect also of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

I like to think of these matters sometimes when I enter the cool cream beauty of this ancient frame hostelry.

Also of another Henry Brevoort, a descendant of the original proprietor of the farm in New Netherland, who built the substantial old double house at the corner of Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue. Fine iron balconies, pillared door, within a small green enclosure, and a walled garden to one side: all preserved.

Here was held (in 1840) the first masked ball given in New York. An affair of picturesque celebrity, on account of the occasion it furnished a famous beauty of the day, Miss Mathilda Barclay, daughter of Anthony Barclay, the British consul, to elope in fancy dress, domino and mask with a certain young Burgwyne of South Carolina, of whom her parents had unamiable views.

She went as Lalla Rookh and he as Feramorz, and in this disguise they slipped away from the ball, at four in the morning, and were married. That, it seems to me, is the way for a man who does not enjoy solemn ceremonies to be happy while getting married.

Across the way, at the corner of Eighth Street, the mellow white hotel maintains the distinguished name, and touches "the Avenue" with a very aromatic French flavor. Famous for its cuisine, largely patronized by the transient French population of the city, a habitual port of call of many painters and writers, the scene of the annual Illustrators' Ball, and so on.

I like within the frequent spectacle of gentlemen of magnificent bulk and huge black beards, in general effect impressively suggesting the probability of their all being Academicians. I like the fact (or the hypothesis) that all the waiters are Looeys and Sharses and Gastongs. I like the little marble-top tables with wire spindle legs. I like the lady patrons (Oh! immensely) who are frequently very chic (and with exquisite ankles). I like the young gentlemen customers, who (many of them) look exactly as though their faces were modelled in wax, and who

wear the sort of delicate moustaches that are advertised in *Vanity Fair.*

But even more I like the quaintness of the scene without doors. There along the curb, you recall, stand (in summer beneath the pleasant greenery of drooping trees), awaiting hire, a succession of those delightful, open, low-swung, horse-drawn vehicles, victorias, which were the fashionable thing at the period named by Mrs. Wharton "The Age of Innocence." The romantically leisurely drivers of these unbelievably leisurely craft are perfectly turned out to be, so to say, in the picture. They affect coachmen's coats (piquantly tempered by age) with large silver buttons and, in mild weather, top hats constructed of straw, painted black. In some instances these coachmen are "colored"—which is a very pleasant thing, too, I think.

This hotel, naturally, has figured in a number of pieces of fiction. In Samuel Merwin's novel "The Trufflers" it is the Parisian, where Greenwich Village, when in funds, dines, lunches, breakfasts in the little rooms which you enter from the Avenue, directly under the wide front steps, or from the side street through the bar, and where Upper West Side, when seeking the

quaintly foreign dissociated from squalor, goes up the steps into the airy eating rooms with full length hinged windows to dine. And where (in this book) the young lady whose blooming presence in the barber shop in the basement invites you to manicure attentions gives rise to some very dramatic occurrences. The place, this shop, of Marius (as called in the story), "the one barber in New York who does not ask 'Wet or dry.'"

Now I had plumb forgotten about this barber's celebrity in fiction when the other day I entered this shop. And I was struck with embarrassment by the immediate attentions of so very distinguished a figure as that which sprang forward to assist me out of my coat. I thought surely this gentleman must be some kind of an Ambassador, who had perhaps mistaken me for the President. A slimmish man, obviously very French. Amazingly, overwhelmingly polite. Fine, a very fine beard. Long. Swept his chest. Pointed. Auburn. Wavy. Silken. Shot delicately with grey. Beautifully kept. Responded gently to the breeze—waving softly to and fro. A most beautiful beard—oh, my! And a glorious crown of hair! It rose from the line of its parting in a billowing wave, then fell with a luxuriant and

graceful sweep to his ear. Only when he had tucked me in the chair could I realize that this must be the head barber. I had never before had the honor of being served by, or even of having seen himself, the proprietor here.

Then I mentioned Mr. Merwin's book. He took from a drawer several copies of *The Saturday Evening Post,* in which periodical the story had appeared serially, proudly to exhibit them to me. So it was we fell to chatting of his place. He had been here some sixteen or eighteen years. Before he had opened his shop this room had been several tiny rooms; Cleveland Moffett had for a time occupied them as a residence, and had here written his first book. My friend gayly produced a copy of an old magazine article by Mr. Moffett in which mention was given the shop.

* * * * * * *

Shaved, I was straightened up to have my hair trimmed. And, being for a moment free to look about, I spied a card on the wall. It said:

SILK HATS IRONED
25¢
COUP-DE-FER-AU CHAPEAU

But, my goodness! That was not all. No, indeed!

This very man who was cutting my hair had cut the hair of General Joffre—when he had his hair here in the United States. At "Mr. Frick's house," where they were guests, he had attended the distinguished party on its mission here. He would go in the morning, stay until they had gone forth for the day; return in the afternoon, and spruce them up for their evening out.

And what did they say, these great men of might?

Well, Joffre didn't say much. They were always out late—hurry out again. He shaved some of them "almost in the bath." That fellow, the Blue Devil,—one leg—cane—but back and forth from his bath quick like anybody. He was the most talkative:

"I could not but laugh at what he told me. I asked, 'Do you speak English?' 'No,' he said, 'but I ought to.' 'How is that?' I asked. 'Because,' he said, 'I'm half American.' 'Oh!' I said, 'your father then was American and your mother French?' 'No,' he said. 'Ah!' I say, 'then your mother was American and your father

was French.' Do you understand? I say that to him. 'No,' he say; 'no.' 'What then?' I ask. 'Why,' he say, 'I have one leg in France and one leg in America.' I could not but laugh. Do you understand?"

When the visitors had departed Mr. Frick asked my friend for his bill. "Oh, no!" he said; "he would take nothing but the great honor for his little services."

My hair cut was finished. As I paid him (there being in this case, I felt, no such great honor for his little services), he showed me a drawing on the wall of a poodle he had one time owned. It had died. Very sad. He was very fond of dogs. Of bred dogs, that is. He bred them himself. He handed me his card as a professional dog fancier. It read:

CHINK A TU KENNELS
CHOW CHOWS, PEKINGESES, POMERANIANS, ALL COLORS
FROM PRICE WINNING STOCK
MINIATURE SPECIMENS
AT STUD. PEKINGESE, WONDERFUL SON OF WENTY OF HYDEGREE. FEE REASONABLE.
AT STUD. LORD CHOLMONDELEY III SON OF CHAMPION LORD CHOLMONDELEY II.
TOY DOGS BOARDED
MME. HENRI GRECHEN

Yes, that morning he had done "some manicure work" for his dogs. She looked up, the manicurist (milk-white blonde, black velvet gown), and said, "Do you use the clippers?"

He: "Yes, of course. But not powder and polish. Quick, they want. Not hold hands for hour—conversation about best show in town."

He bowed, very low, as I crossed his threshold. I turned and bowed, very low, to him. A man of many parts and a barber illustrious in his profession. It was some time before my head cooled off.

CHAPTER V

SEEING MR. CHESTERTON

SOMEWHAT later in this article I am going to present an "interview" (or something like that) with Gilbert K. Chesterton. At least I hope I am going to present it. Yesterday it looked as though I might have to get up my interview without having seen Mr. Chesterton. Though today the situation appears somewhat brighter. "Seeing" Mr. Chesterton (on his visit over here, at any rate) seems to be a complicated matter.

As anything which gives some view of the workings of the Chestertonian machinery ought to be of interest to all who can lay claim to the happy state of mind of being Chestertonites, I'll begin by telling the proceedings so far in this affair. Then as matters progress to supply me with more material (if they do progress) I'll continue.

I one time wrote an article in which I told with what surprising ease I saw Mr. Chesterton

several years ago in England. Without acquaintances in England, some sort of a fit of impudence seized me. I wrote Mr. Chesterton a letter, communicating to him the intelligence that I had arrived in London, that it was my belief that he was one of the noblest and most interesting monuments in England; and I asked him if he supposed that he could be "viewed" by me, at some street corner, say, at a time appointed, as he rumbled past in his triumphal car. Mrs. Chesterton replied directly in a note that her husband wished to thank me for my letter and to say that he would be pleased if I cared to come down to spend an afternoon with him at Beaconsfield. Mr. Chesterton, I later recollected, had no means readily at hand of ascertaining whether or not I was an American pickpocket; but from the deference of his manner I was led to suspect that he vaguely supposed I was perhaps the owner of the New York *Times*, or somebody like that.

This escapade of my visit to Overroads I suppose it was that put into the head of the editor of *The Bookman* the notion that I was a person with ready access to Mr. Chesterton. So I was served with a hurry-up assignment to see him

and to deliver an article about my seeing him for the March number of the magazine before that issue, then largely in the hands of the printers, got off the press. Thus my adventures, the termination of which are at present considerably up in the air, began.

I at once wrote to Mr. Chesterton at the hotel where at the moment he was in Boston. At the same time I wrote to Lee Keedick ("Manager of the World's Most Celebrated Lecturers") at his office in New York. I had picked up the impression that a lecture manager of this caliber owned outright the time of a visiting celebrity whom he promoted, and that you couldn't even telephone the celebrity without the manager's permission. I didn't know that you couldn't telephone him anyway. Or that you couldn't telephone the manager either.

Mr. Keedick very promptly replied that he would be very glad to do everything that he could to bring about the interview. Or at least I received a very courteous letter to this effect which bore a signature which I took to be that of Mr. Keedick.

Mr. Chesterton was not to be back in New York until after a couple of days. On the day

set for his return to town I attempted to communicate with Mr. Keedick by telephone. I am (I fear) a bit slow at the etiquette of telephones, and I so far provoked a young woman at the other end of the wire as to cause her to demand rather sharply, "Who are you?" This matter adjusted amicably, Mr. Keedick it developed was so utterly remote from attainment that I am not altogether sure such a person exists. However, another gentleman responded cordially enough. Still, it seemed to me (upon reflection) that in a matter of this urgent nature I had been at fault in having failed to obtain more definiteness in the matter of an appointment. So I went round to the manager's office. Very affably received. Presented to a gentleman fetched for that purpose from another room, where he had been closeted with someone else. Mr. Widdecombe, this gentleman's name. Introduced as Mr. Chesterton's secretary. A pronounced Englishman in effect. Said very politely indeed, several times, that he was "delighted." Mr. Chesterton, however, was going away tomorrow. Would return two days hence. Made, Mr. Widdecombe, very careful memorandum of my address.

SEEING MR. CHESTERTON

In due course of time thought I'd better look up Mr. Widdecombe again—his memorandum might have got mislaid. Telephoned lecture bureau. Satisfied young lady of honorable intentions. Explained matters all over again to owner of agreeable masculine voice. Received assurance that Mr. Widdecombe would be reminded at once of pressing state of affairs. Disturbed by uneventful flight of time, called in at lecture bureau once more. Learned that Mr. Widdecombe had not yet turned up. They, however, would try to get him on the wire at the Biltmore for me. Yes, he was there, but the fourth floor desk of the hotel said he had just gone into Mr. Chesterton's room, and so (as, apparently, everyone ought to know) could not be communicated with just now. He would call up shortly. Lecture people suggested that I go round to the hotel. If Mr. Widdecombe called in the meantime they'd tell him I was on my way over.

Thought I recognized the gentleman stepping out of the elevator at the fourth floor. I did not know whether or not it was at all what you did to lay hold of an Englishman in so abrupt a fashion, but concluded this would have to be done. Mr. Widdecombe was all courtesy. The

point, however, was that "Mr. Chesterton had had an hour of it this morning. Had had an hour of it." This afternoon he was getting off some work for London. Then tomorrow, of course, would be his lecture. My matter *did* seem to be urgent. But what could "we" do? Mr. Chesterton was a "beautiful man." He had been so hospitable to the gentlemen of the press. But if we should go in to him now he would say, "Dear me! Dear me!" I readily saw, of course, that this would be an awful thing, still . . .

Mr. Widdecombe was somewhat inclined to think that we "could do" this: Suppose I should come to the Times Square Theatre the next afternoon, at about a quarter to five, call for him at the stage entrance. Yes, he thought we could arrange it that way. I could talk to Mr. Chesterton in the taxi on the way back to the hotel. Perhaps detain him for a few moments afterward. Mr. Widdecombe smiled very pleasantly indeed at the idea of so happy a solution of our difficulties. And I myself was rather taken by the notion of interviewing Mr. Chesterton in a cab. The fancy occurred to me that this was perhaps after all the most fitting place in

the whole world in which to interview Mr. Chesterton.

So everything seems to be all right.

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New complications! (This is the following day.) In the morning mail a letter from Mrs. Chesterton, saying so sorry not to have answered my letter before, but it had been almost impossible to deal with the correspondence that had reached them since they arrived in America. Her husband asked her to say he would very much like to see me. And could I call at the hotel round about twelve o'clock on Sunday morning? No difficulty about meeting Mr. Chesterton in the kindness of that. But Sunday might be quite too late for the purpose of my article. So I'll go to the theatre anyway, and I'll certainly accept all Chesterton invitations.

* * * * * * *

A colored dignitary in a uniform sumptuously befrogged with gold lace who commanded the portal directed me to the stage entrance. I passed into a dark and apparently deserted passage and paused to consider my next step. Before me was a tall, brightly lighted aperture, and coming through this I caught the sound, gently

rising and falling, of a rather dulcet voice. A slight pause in the flow of individual utterance, and directly following upon this a soft wave as of the intimate mirth of an audience wafted about what was evidently the auditorium beyond. Just then a figure duskily defined itself before me and addressed me in a gruff whisper. I was directed to proceed around the passage extending ahead, to Room Three. I should have passed behind a tall screen (I recognized later), but inadvertently I passed before it, and suddenly found myself the target of thousands upon thousands of eyes—and the unmistakable back of Mr. Chesterton looming in the brilliance directly before me.

Regaining the passage, I found a door labelled A 3. Receiving no response to my knock, I opened it; and peered into a lighted cubby-hole about one-third the size of a very small hall bedroom. The only object of any conspicuousness presented to me was a huge, dark garment hanging from a hook in the wall. It seemed to be—ah! yes; it was a voluminous overcoat with a queer cape attached. So; I was in the right shop all right.

I thought I ought to look around and try to

find somebody. I wandered into what I suppose are the "wings" of the theatre. Anyway, I had an excellent view, from one side, of the stage and of a portion of one gallery. The only person quite near me was a fireman, who paid no attention whatever to me, but continued to gaze out steadily at Mr. Chesterton, with an expression of countenance which (as well as I could decipher it) registered fascinated incomprehension. I attempted to lean against what I supposed was a wall, but to my great fright the whole structure nearly tumbled over as I barely touched it. Perceiving a chair the other side of the fireman, I passed before him, sat down, and gave myself over to contemplation of the spectacle.

My first impression, I think, was that Mr. Chesterton was speaking in so conversational a key that I should have expected to hear cries of "Louder!" coming from all over the house. But from the lighted expressions of the faces far away in the corner of the gallery visible to me he was apparently being followed perfectly. I did not then know that at his first public appearance in New York he had referred to his lecturing voice as the original mouse that came from the moun-

tain. Nor had I then seen Francis Hackett's comment upon it that: "It wasn't, of course, a bellow. Neither was it a squeak." Mr. Hackett adds that it is "the ordinary good lecture-hall voice." I do not feel that this quite describes my own impression of it the other afternoon. Rather, perhaps, I should put the matter in this way. My recollection of the conversation I had with him in 1914 at Beaconsfield is that there was a much more ruddy quality to his voice then than the other day, and more, much more, in the turn of his talk a racy note of the burly world.

Perhaps he feels that before a "representative" American audience one should be altogether what used to be called "genteel." At any rate, I certainly heard the other day the voice of a modest, very friendly, cultivated, nimble-minded gentleman, speaking with the nicety of precision more frequently observed among English people than among Americans. There was in it even a trace of a tone as though it were most at home within university walls. Though, indeed, I am glad to say, Mr. Chesterton did not abstain from erudite, amused, and amusing allusions to the society most at home in "pubs." And I cannot but suspect that perhaps he would have been found a

shade more amusing even than he was if . . . but, no matter.

One gentleman who has written a piece about his impressions of Mr. Chesterton's lectures here felt that his audience didn't have quite as much of a good time as the members of it expected to have. I heard only a brief, concluding portion of one lecture. The portion of the audience which came most closely before my observation were those seated at the well filled press table, which stood directly between the speaker and me. These naïve beings gave every evidence of getting, to speak temperately, their money's worth.

Though Mr. Chesterton turned the pages of notes as he spoke, he could not be said to have read his lecture. On the other hand, it was clear that he did not appreciably depart from a carefully prepared disquisition.

The tumbled mane which tops him off seemed more massive even than before. It did not, though, appear quite so tumbled. I think there had been an effort (since 1914) to brush it quite nicely. Certainly it is ever so much greyer. I think in my earlier article I said something like this: "Mr. Chesterton has so remarkably red a

face that his smallish moustache seems lightish in color against it." While Mr. Chesterton's face today could not be described as pale, it looks more like a face and less like a glowing full moon. The moustache is darker against it; less bristling than before, more straggly.

A couple of our recent commentators upon Mr. Chesterton have taken a fling at the matter of his not being as huge as, it seems to them, he has been made out to be. I remember that when I saw him before I was even startled to find him more monstrous than even he had appeared in his pictures. He appears to take part a good deal in pageants in England; and recent photographs of him as Falstaff, or Tony Weller, or Mr. Pickwick, or somebody like that, have not altogether squared up with my recollection of him. True, he has not quite the bulk he had before; but it is a captious critic, I should say, who would not consider him sufficiently elephantine for all ordinary purposes.

He was saying (much to the delight of the house) when I became one of the audience, that he would "not regard this as the time or the occasion for him to comment upon the lid on liquor." A bit later in the course of his answer to the

question he had propounded, "Shall We Abolish the Inevitable," he got an especially good hand when he remarked: "People nowadays do not like statements having authority—but they will accept any statement without authority." He concluded his denunciation of the idea of fatalism with the declaration: "Whatever man is, he is not in one sense a part of nature." "He has committed crimes, Crimes," he repeated—with gusto in the use of the word,—"and performed heroisms which no animal ever tried to do. Let us hold ourselves free from the boundary of the material order of things, for so shall we have a chance in the future to do things far too historic for prophecy."

I darted back toward Room Three, ran into Mr. Widdecombe, we wheeled, and saw the mountain approaching. Whereas before, this off-stage place had been deserted, now the scene was populous—with the figures of agitated young women. Mr. Widdecombe, however, with much valiance secured Mr. Chesterton. "Yes, yes," he said, and (remarkable remark!), "I had the pleasure of meeting you in England." He glanced about rather nervously at the dancing figures seeking to obtain him, and led the way

for me into the dressing room. Mr. Widdecombe pulled the door to from without.

I am far from being as large as Mr. Chesterton, but the two of us closeted in that compartment was an absurdity. Mr. Chesterton eclipsed a chair, and beamed upon me with an expression of Cheeryble-like brightness. Upon his arrival in New York he had declared to the press that he would not write a book of his impressions of the United States. I asked him if, after being here a week or so, he had changed his mind as to this determination. "Not definitely," he said, "not definitely. But, of course, one could never tell what one might do." He might write a book about us, then? Yes, he might. Did he think it at all likely that he would take up residence over here? A very joyous smile: "One's own country is best," he said. Rumors had several times been afloat that he had entered the Roman Catholic Church. Would he say whether there was any likelihood of his doing this? He was an Anglican Catholic, he replied. Not a Roman Catholic—yet. That was not to say that he might not be—if the English Church should become more Protestant. What was his next book to be?

Had he any project in mind of going to Turkey, or Mexico, or some such place? No; the only books he was working on at present were a new volume of short stories and a book (smiling again widely) on eugenics. He knew Mr. Lucas, of course? "Yes, fine fellow." Did he know Frank Swinnerton? No. What was . . . But the door was popped open. Several persons were waiting for him, among them Mrs. Chesterton. I helped him into the cape-coat. Stood behind the door so that when it was opened he could get out. "You know Mr. Holliday," he said to Mrs. Chesterton. "Thank you, so much," he said to me. And was whisked away.

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Sunday at the hotel. He was late in arriving. I thought it would be pleasanter to wait a bit out in front. Expected he would drive up soon in a taxi. Then I saw him coming around the corner, walking, rolling slowly from side to side like a great ship, Mrs. Chesterton with him—a little lady whose stature suggested the idea of a yacht gracefully cruising alongside the huge craft. I wonder if, nowadays when most writers seem to try to look like something else, Mr. Ches-

terton knows how overwhelmingly like a great literary figure he looks.

When we were seated, I asked if he had any dope on his "New Jerusalem" book. He began to tell me how surprised he had been to find Jerusalem as it is. But the substance of this you may find in the book. He expressed sympathy with the idea of Zionism. Remarked that he "might become a Zionist if it could be accomplished in Zion." All that he could find to tell me about his "New Jerusalem" was that it had been "written on the spot." Seemed very disinclined to talk about his own books. Said his feeling in general about each one of them was that he "hoped something would happen to it before anybody saw it."

His surprise at Jerusalem suggested to me the question, Had he been surprised at the United States—what he had seen of it? But he dodged giving any "view" of us. His only comment was on the "multitudinous wooden houses."

Had he met many American authors? The one most recently met, a day or so ago in Northampton, though he had met him before in England, was a gentleman he liked very much. He was so thin Mr. Chesterton thought the two of

them "should go around together." His name? Gerald Stanley Lee.

But there is not a particle more of time that I can spend on this article.

CHAPTER VI

WHEN IS A GREAT CITY A SMALL VILLAGE?

HOW many times you have noticed it! Regular phenomenon. Suddenly, within a few hours, the whole nature of the great city is changed—your city and mine, New York or Chicago, or Boston or Buffalo or Philadelphia.

Though nobody seems to say much about it afterward. Just sort of take the thing for granted.

It is just like Armistice Night, every once in awhile. Total strangers suddenly begin to call each other "Neighbor." Voices everywhere become jollier. Numerous passersby begin to whistle and sing. People go with a skip and a jump. Catcalls are heard. Groups may be seen all around going arm in arm, and here and there with arms about necks. Anybody speaks to you merrily. Merrily you speak to anybody. All eyes shine. Roses are in every cheek. Hurry is abandoned. Small boys run wild. Nobody now objects to their stealing a ride. It is fun to see

their swinging legs dangling over the tail of every wagon. Sour human nature is purged. Good humor reigns. Hurrah!

I mean on the night of a big snow.

This year it looked for long as though we were going to be done out of this truly Dickensean festival. Seemed like we were going to be like those unfortunate people in Southern California, who never have any winter to cheer them up. How tired they must get of their wives and neighbors, with it bland summer all the time. Perhaps that is the reason there is such a promiscuous domestic life out there.

Young Will Shakespeare had the dope. He piped the weather for jollity and pep. "When blood is nipp'd"—"a merry note!"

You remember how it was this time: Spring all winter—and spring fever, too, a good many of us had all the while. (My doctor said it was "malaria" with me.) We were congratulating ourselves that we were going to "get by" without any "blizzards" at all this year. We became "softy." We guarded ourselves with our umbrellas against the shower. We became prudent. And what is it Stevenson says of that? "So soon as prudence has begun to grow up in the brain,

like a dismal fungus, it finds its first expression in a paralysis of generous acts. The victim begins to shrink spiritually; he develops a fancy for parlors with a regulated temperature, and takes his morality on the principle of thin shoes and tepid milk."

Then one night there came a tinkle in the temperature as of sleigh bells. And the town, the world sank into a soft blanket of white. Were you out then? Ah! you should have been. You were not, I hope, in a parlor with a regulated temperature.

Well, anyhow, everybody else was out. The cross streets of the big city had "all to oncet" taken on the air of a small town "sociable." Shadowy multitudes seemed to sprout up out of the ground. The sidewalks, especially those usually so deserted at this hour, now ahum with dark busy bowing figures, rang and clanged gayly with the sound of scoop and shovel. In the democratic, jovial, village-like spirit of the occasion, many of the workers (those more staid and portly ones) removed their coats. Every here and there an areaway held, in a holiday effect, a cluster of bare-headed maid-servants—the "gallery" of the shovellers, whose presence

tended to make of the task of clearing the sidewalk a night-hour lark.

Voices in the street, as you know, and laughter there, is never so musical as above snow-stilled pavements. Then, too, cheery echoes are abroad among the recesses between the houses, in the courts and down the ways where packages are delivered. The shovellers good-naturedly banter one another and pass a cordial jest with those who travel by. And every here and there the rich contralto of negro mirth is heard.

I do not know that the city's parks are not a finer spectacle under snow than in the summer—their dark glistening branches laden à la Christmas card, and, after dark, their festoons of lamps more twinkling and more yellow than at any other time.

Along Broadway what a whirl! The street like an arena, hordes of gladiators in doughty combat with the onslaught of the storm, snow-carts banging and backing about (horses seem to stomp and snort and rear more in a snow-storm than at any other time), new ridiculously miniature "caterpillar tractors" performing like toy tanks at war, traffic in a hilarious tangle, street cars crawling along looking more than

ever before like prodigious cat-eyed bugs. Here with a terrific buzz comes one all dark furiously thrashing the snow from side to side by means of revolving brooms beneath. The crowds an animated silhouette against the whitened air. One wants to hop and shout one feels so much alive.

Lots of funny things happen. A taxicab there has got stuck in a drift. It whirs in a passion. Wallows forward. Runs its nose up a little hillock of hard crusted snow. Stops. Makes a fine hubbub. Slides back, stilled, exhausted. Tries again. Same thing repeated. A pounding is heard on the inside of the door. Chauffeur reaches back his hand to turn handle of door. Something is wrong. He climbs down. Pulls at door. Nothing doing. Door has apparently been sprung somehow. Taxi is now observed to be a bit listed to one side. Pounding, louder than before, again heard from inside. Conductor from nearby car comes to side of chauffeur. Also policeman. All lay hold of each other and pull with united effort at taxi door. Door flies open. Closely knit group of chauffeur, conductor and policeman nearly tumbles backward into snow. From cab door descends tall, elegant figure in evening clothes and top hat. Followed by even

more elegant figure of slender lady in opera cloak. For some reason she appears to be very angry, and shakes her fist at her three humble liberators. The couple seek some path, from the trampled oasis where they stand, through the drifts to the sidewalk. There is none. Her dazzling skirt she has caught high from the mess about her feet. Perhaps a yard of pale yellow silken hose is revealed above her satin pumps. Finally in desperation the two plunge forward, taking gigantic steps, sinking knee-deep at every onward move, tottering, swaying and at length fairly scrambling toward the haven of the curb. The dozens along the sidewalk who have been held spellbound by what they have found to be so delicious a comedy turn to one another with delighted smiles—and move along again on their way.

It is things like this always happening all about which make snow-storm nights in the city such a hippodrome affair, and all the world akin.

Over on the Avenue busses are busily pushing plows hitched on before. There one has got stalled in a drift. It whirs and buzzes and backs and starts and whirs and buzzes over and over again. No use, it seems. Still, draped along the

curb, the spectators stand, unmindful of the gale, as absorbed as if at a Yale-Princeton game. Buzzzzzzzzzz—Whirrrrrrrrrrr—and away. She's off! A feeble cheer goes up. And everybody starts onward again in better humor with himself for having seen so entertaining a show.

It snowed the night through.

In the morning banks of snow breast-high through the side streets. Through a narrow aisle down the middle of the roadway trucks cars and wagons slowly go in single file. Moving thus all in a single line they have something the effect of a circus parade—elephants and lion cages and so on.

And lions remind me. It is always well to look at public statues and outdoor pieces of sculpture the morning after a heavy snow. You are likely to find them very comical apparitions. The celebrated literary lions before the New York Public Library, for instance, wore throughout the day after the first big snow of this winter ridiculous tall caps pulled down very rakishly over their eyes.

Streaming from the direction of the railroad station were coming the swarms of our commuter friends, the legs of many of them hoisting along

those prodigious "arctics" which are all the vogue nowadays. Isn't it curious? There was a time when if you were obliged to wear glasses you got them as nearly invisible as possible. If you were a man you felt there was something shameful about having "weak" eyes. If a woman, you "just knew" that glasses made you look "horrid." And when you wore overshoes you got them as inconspicuous as possible. Now you affect shell spectacles that can be seen a block away, and having huge lenses. Now there is nothing smarter, apparently, than for a young woman with a trim foot to come into town swaddled in floppers which fit her slim ankles like a bucket.

Men are still shovelling and scraping away at the streets, a motley army. What is it so many persons are pausing to smile at, others hurrying on but with grinning faces turned back? It is at a gentleman shoveller. Here recruited somehow among this gang of husky laborers is a slim eccentric figure in a—yes, a frock coat, a derby hat, kid gloves, and very tight trousers . . . a quaint picture of the shabby genteel. Walking very briskly back and forth, very upright in carriage, the small of his back curved inward, he pushes his scraper before him holding it by the

very tip of the long handle—and as well as can be observed doesn't scrape anything at all. His fellow workers regard him with surly disgust and roughly bump into him at every opportunity. What story is there, in that absurd, pathetic scene, what O. Henry tale of mischance in a great city?

A wagon on a side street has got its wheels ground into the snow bank at the side of the narrow cleared way. Such accidents are all about, and everywhere men may be seen leaving their own affairs to give a helping hand to a fellow being in sore straits. The visitation of a great snow storm strikingly unites the bonds of the brotherhood of man.

Stalled for interminable periods in suburban trains and in traffic jams hurried men give themselves up cheerfully to the philosophic virtue of patience.

Vagabonds sent on errands two miles away return after three hours with tales of the awful slowness of trolley cars. And on days of great snow storms meet with Christian forgiveness.

CHAPTER VII

THE UNUSUALNESS OF PARISIAN PHILADELPHIA

I DISCOVERED the other day that Philadelphia is a very great deal nearer to Paris than New York is.

How do I figure out that?

Plain enough. It's because New York women, buds and matrons, thinking they are got up (or as the English say, "turned out") smart as anything, are parading around in fashions today altogether passée.

You know the New York scene. And how for some considerable time now its most—well, most apparent feature has been a—er, a hosiery display . . . unparalleled off the gay stage of musical comedy. Very, so to speak, exhilarating that once was—the glistening spectacle of, moving all about, those symmetrically tapering lines of pink and rose and orange and pearl and taupe and heather tan and heather green and purple wool and sheen of black and gloss of mottled snake and—and all that.

But, I am afraid, the eye over-long accustomed to the great Metropolitan movie thriller of the fashionable streets had become somewhat dulled.

The Parisienne knew about the peculiar character of the eye, and that it ceases to see with any emotional response at all that which remains within its range of vision for any extended length of time. So she (roguish witch!) alertly changed the picture.

I picked up by chance, during my two-hour run on the train, a copy of one of our most dashing fashion journals. It was the "Forecast of Spring Fashions" number. I opened it, at random, at the headline: "The Short Skirt Has Had Its Day in Paris." Below was a jolly photograph (of a stunning lady at the latest races at Auteuil) illustrating "the new skirt length." Visible beneath the hem—a trim foot, and a bit of tidy ankle.

Who was the fellow (with a gifted eye for the lasses) who spoke with such delight of the tiny feet that "like little mice run in and out"? And there was that other poet (what was his name? I declare! my literature is getting awful rusty), who sang with such relish the charm of feminine

drapery "concealing yet revealing." Anyhow, you know what I'm getting at.

I closed the magazine and forgot about the matter—until shortly after I had come out of the Broad Street Station.

The modish scene I apprehended was, to an eye accustomed steadily for some time to the natty abbreviations of Fifth Avenue, a refreshing, a charming spectacle. I seemed suddenly to have left my "orchestra seat." And to have returned again to a view of, so to put it, ladies in private life.

Though, indeed, occasionally in the distance I caught a flashing glimpse of, according to Paris decree, the obsolete skirt length.

Come to think of it, isn't this so, too: that there are in Philadelphia more rose-cheeked damsels of hearty figure and athletic-heel swing than you usually come across in other cities?

At any rate, there are quite a number of very unusual things about "Phila," as I believe intimate friends of the city affectionately call the place. Things which it may be you have not noticed lately—perhaps because you haven't been there recently, or maybe because you live there, and so see them every day.

One of the unusual things about Philadelphia is that so many ladies and "gem'men" who do light housekeeping on and around Manhattan Island (in other words "New Yorkers") apparently find it easier frequently to get to Chicago, or Palm Beach, or London, or Santa Barbara than to journey to Philadelphia. I suppose the reason for this state of mind is the same as the cause of my sometimes feeling that it would be about as simple for me to undertake a trip from the Grand Central to Buffalo as to get from Times Square down to Fulton Street for a luncheon appointment. A place which is only half an hour, or two hours away, is a place, you think, that you can run down to any time. And—well, just at the moment with everything so pressing and all that. To become keyed up about taking a "real" trip is another matter.

And when I myself do get there I always feel that it is an unusual thing that I have allowed so long a time to lapse since I came before. Because it is so unusually pleasant and restful a ride that it makes me sore to think what an unusually deuce of a thing I am put to every night going home in the rush hour to Dyckman Street on the subway.

PARISIAN PHILADELPHIA

It is an unusual thing (or, at least, so it seems to me) that in Philadelphia cards in windows advertising rooms to let should be (as they are) labelled "Vacancies."

It is an unusual thing that here so many undertakers' shops should be conducted in what appear to be private residences. It is an unusual thing that there should be so many ways of paying your fare on the street cars—in some you pay when you get on, in others when you get off. It is an unusual thing that in Philadelphia there are more different kinds of street lamps than (I suspect) there are in any other city in the world. There are powerful arc lamps, high on tall poles, cold white in their light. There are lower down, particularly pleasant in the twinkle of their numbers in Washington Square, gas lamps glowing a mellow yellow through their mantles. Various other kinds of lamps, too. But the ones I like best are those squat fellows throughout Independence Square. Octagonal iron-bound boxes of glass, small at the base, wide at the top, with a kind of ecclesiastical derby hat of iron as a lid. They somehow suggest to me the lamps which I fancy before Will Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

Here golden Diana with her bow does not poise high on her slender Spanish tower. But from far above the "Public Buildings" Brother Penn looks down on more banks, United States Mints, trust companies, firms dealing in securities, places handling investments, and such-like business concerns than (one has a feeling) can be found in any other city in Christendom. There are too, I should guess, in Philadelphia about as many different styles and periods of architecture as in any other municipality between the two great seas: Georgian, Colonial, bay-window, London brick row, ramshackle frame, modern mansion, skyscraper, etc., etc., etc. And certainly I don't know where one could go to count more different kinds of porches. Nor where one could find so many such pleasant oddities of today as hitching-blocks, doorway foot-scrapers, and those old friends of our childhood the front yard stone storks.

And where, Oh, where! (not even in London) can one find so many alleys to the square inch? Many of them, lanes of but a few blocks in length, highly respectable, even aristocratic, quarters of the town. Such as Camac Street, tucked away between Thirteenth and Twelfth Streets, one

block of it either side of Locust, and the home or haunt of those of artistic persuasion. Here the famous Franklin Inn Club, the charming Poor Richard Club, and divers other clubs of kindred spirit. Unusual this quaint street of art in this: in fixing it up for its present purpose its quaintness and its "artiness" have not been overdone. Far, far finer in effect than New York's over eccentric alley of painters, Washington Mews, its original loveliness has simply been restored. It is as jolly to look upon as London's artist nook, Cheyne Row. Perhaps even jollier.

Now another unusual thing about Philadelphia is that Philadelphians standing within three blocks of the place can't tell you where South Carlisle Street is. Professional Philadelphians, such as policemen, firemen, postmen, street car men, can't do it. In the attempt they contradict each other, and quarrel among themselves. For the benefit of both Philadelphians and visitors to the city I will set down here exactly the location of South Carlisle Street. West of Broad, south of Pine, it runs one block from Pine to Lombard Street. After a jump, where there isn't any of it, north of Market Street there is more of it.

But what the dickens is South Carlisle Street, and why should anybody care where it is? Well, though it isn't in the books on Historic Shrines of America it is a street you "hadn't ought to" miss. It's about twelve feet (or something like that) from wall to wall. The doorways seem to be about three feet wide. There, in South Carlisle Street, Philadelphia's mahogany doors, fanlights above, white pillars before, marble steps below, her immaculate red brick, her freshly painted wooden shutters, her gleaming brass knockers are in their most exquisite perfection.

A wealthy and cultivated gentleman or two "took up" the street a year or so ago, decided to make their homes there, and it has become quite "class." Same idea, more or less, that Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt has concerning the "exodus" of her set from Fifth Avenue to unheard-of Sutton Place over among the tall yellow chimneys by New York's East River.

Considering the great wealth in Philadelphia and its environs, particularly those patrician environs lying toward Harrisburg, it is, I think, unusual that you never see on the streets there a Pekingese or a Pomeranian attended by a personage in livery.

Unusual, too, that in a city of the first class along the eastern seaboard so few canes are "worn."

And, by the way, that's an unusual railroad service from Philadelphia to New York. Conductor calls out: "Train for Newark and New York. Newark first stop." Train slides a few feet—halts at West Philadelphia. Spins along a bit again, and pulls up at North Philadelphia. Stops later along the way at Trenton, Newark, and Manhattan Junction. I really do not see, putting a wreck out of the calculation, where else it could stop.

I took from a boy in the Pennsylvania station a copy of one of New York's most popular evening papers. It came apart in the middle. Straightening it out, I caught a headline on the "Talks to Women" page. It read "Short Skirts Remain." Below a cut of a beaming lass attired, the caption said, in "frock of navy blue ruffled taffeta with short sleeves and 'shorter' skirt."

When I came out onto the street the temperature (in skirts) seemed to have risen since my departure a couple of days before.

CHAPTER VIII

OUR LAST SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AS A FINE ART

I HAVE just witnessed a revelation. At least, it was a revelation to me. I'm keen on telling you all about it.

One of my earlier articles in this series had to do with the establishment here and there in a great city of those gentlemen engaged in the estimable business of packing you up for keeps—that is the "parlors" of various sorts of "undertakers." I had been much struck by the vast number of cozy little places catering, so to say, to the poor and humble who have forever (as Stevenson puts it) "parted company with their aches and ecstasies." And I had wondered at how very few places there were in evidence on the streets to take care of the "remains" of, in a manner of speaking, the first-cabin passengers in life, those who have travelled through their days in a fashion de luxe. The establishments of this type which now and then I did see were very palatial indeed—and didn't look at all as though

they would countenance the corpse of just an ordinary person such as you and me.

Also, all the undertaking establishments visible to me in my goings and comings about town were quite obviously undertaking establishments. They displayed within and without the air, the accoutrements, the paraphernalia traditionally associated with one's last social engagement on earth, his funeral. They varied only in this: some were rich and haughty in general effect, others simple and perhaps dingy in appearance. But each and all of them looked as much like an undertaking shop as a barber shop looks like a barber shop. You could not possibly have mistaken any one of them for a Turkish bath establishment, or a Carnegie library, or an office for steamship tickets.

As I say, I wrote that article telling all this and that about what anybody may see any day as he goes about on his rounds through the thick of the city. But when the article appeared—originally—it soon developed that I was not abreast of undertaking matters at all. I had not in the least kept track of the remarkable advances which have to date been made in the art of being buried—and a very fine art, in the advanced

phases of the affair, it certainly has become. I did not even know the present-day, the correct, name for what I, in so old-fashioned a condition of mind, called an "undertaker's." No.

That word, "undertaker," has long, long ago been discarded by the élite of the profession. What a queer word as a business title it was, anyway! How did it originally ever come to be used in its mortuary relation? No one in the business that I have asked has been able to tell me. And why in the dim past when names were being given to trades did not this word, undertaker, seem to be equally descriptive of the career of physician or attorney? Indeed, does not he that sets himself the highly hazardous task of saving a living fellow being from disease or the gallows undertake to do more than he who merely performs the quiet office of laying us away?

And then, oddly enough for its tragic associations, the word acquired in our minds something of a ludicrous turn. It was reminiscent of Dickens, of hired professional "mourners," and that sort of thing. At mention of the word, a picture popped into our mind of a grotesquely angular being, of sallow, elongated features and lugu-

brious manner, garbed in a rusty frock coat and "stove pipe" hat, who put together before him the tips of black-gloved fingers and spoke with a hollow sound. We would say to our friends when they were feeling blue: "What's the matter with you? You act like an undertaker."

Well, as doubtless you have noticed, the term "funeral director" more or less recently pretty well superseded the word undertaker among progressive concerns. It is a phrase much more in the modern spirit, like "domestic science" for (what used to be) "household work," "modiste" for "dressmaker," "maid" for "hired-girl," "psychic" for "fortune teller," "publicity engineer" for "press agent," and so on. And it has a good, business-like, efficient sound.

Still (I discovered) to be buried by a funeral director is not the very latest, the most fashionable thing. The really smart way nowadays of bidding good-bye to the world is to go to the establishment of a "mortician."

Yes; that's what the gentleman said in his very cordial letter: would I care to look over a "real mortician's establishment in New York City?" I replied that nothing could give me greater

pleasure. So at the time appointed a couple of days later his car came round for me.

When I told people of the visit I was about to make, they all laughed, very heartily. Now that brings to one's attention a curious thing: *why* should they laugh? Honestly, between you and me, think hard and tell me what really there *is* funny about going to see a burial establishment?

Paradoxical indeed is the attitude of mind of practically everyone toward this subject of being ushered out of life. Sundry totally contradictory emotions are aroused in the very same person by slightly different aspects of the same subject. If you remark that you are going to spend the afternoon at the undertaker's that is awfully amusing. At the same time, is not nearly everyone down in his heart a bit scared of undertakers' shops? Uncomfortable, gruesome places, would not most of us feel, to have next door?

At any rate, as we glided along I was told by the gentleman who had come to fetch me that the feeling was very general that the presence of a funeral director's establishment depreciated the value of property in the immediate neighborhood. Though, he asserted, this popular idea frequently had not at all been borne out in fact.

OUR LAST SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

It developed (from his lively conversation) that nothing so much annoys a funeral director, or a mortician, as for a visitor to pull old gags which he thinks are smart—such, for instance, as the remark: "I see your business is pretty dead." I gathered that this jocular pleasantry was the stock joke of all near-wits who visited undertakers—I mean morticians.

No; there is another thing which annoys these gentlemen (morticians) even more than such punk puns as that. They deeply resent, I discovered, any disrespectful allusion to their silent clients, such as calling them "stiffs," or something like that. How would you, they ask, like to have someone of yours—someone who but yesterday returned your heart's clasp, now dumb and cold—made game of by such ribaldry? Certainly, I cannot say that I should like it.

Another paradoxical contradiction! Tell me (if you can) what strange spring of his being prompts a man to think it big and bold and hearty of him to speak with such cynical contemptuousness of a fellow man returned to rigid clay.

We had arrived at our destination, I was told. But I saw nothing, but what was (seemingly) a rather handsome private residence, set in a pleas-

ant lawn. Though I did discern by the door a modest plate which read (as I recall the name) "Wentworth Brothers," nothing more. Wentworth Brothers might have been, for all the exterior evidence to the contrary, architects, or teachers of dancing and the piano, or breeders of pedigreed dogs, or dealers in antiques, or physical instructors, or almost anything you please.

This I soon learned was the fundamental principle of the sensitive art of the mortician—to scrap all the old stage properties of the bugaboo type of undertaker.

We passed into a charming hall, light and cheerful, furnished in excellent taste, altogether domestic in effect. A number of bright looking people, apparently attached to the premises, were lightly moving about. I had somewhat the sensation of having come to a most agreeable afternoon tea.

I was presented to my host, as cheerful, wholesome and cordial a young chap as anyone would care anywhere to see. The senior, he, of the brothers. I had been a little depressed that morning, having a bad cold and being fretted by a number of gloomy things, but as we proceeded

through the house my spirits picked up decidedly. I experienced a feeling of mental and physical well-being, so attractive was everything about.

A dainty reception room opened off the hall at the front. My impression was of a nice amount of charming Colonial furniture. Altogether such a room as you might see in an illustration in the magazine *House and Garden.* Secluded back of this rooms having a brisk atmosphere and serving as offices. Peopled by very trim and efficient looking young people.

We descended to the "stock room," a most sanitary looking place of cement floor, ceiling and walls, where was a large store of caskets of many varieties. Behind this a spick and span embalming room which (except for the two tables) somewhat suggested an admirable creamery. Here I discovered that to the mind of the mortician towels belong to the Dark Ages. The up-to-date way of drying hands is by holding them before a blast of air turned on from a pipe.

We ascended to the third floor. Here were the chapels, rooms which might have been designed to accommodate fashionable audiences attending literary lectures. In connection with them a tiny "minister's study," not unlike the

sanctum of a university professor. Also here small hotel suites, each with bath attached, available for the bereaved from out of town. Here, too, snug quarters for wakes. And a spacious chamber wherein friends may sit for a little last visit with the departed. The dominant article of furniture in this room an Empire lounge such as we see supporting the figure of Madame Récamier in the famous portrait by David. A consummate refinement was shown me on this floor: telephones, concealed behind panels in the wall, with no bells to jangle over-tried nerves, but with a tiny red electric globe on the wall to light as the signal.

The top floor a dormitory for male employees, having much the effect of rooms for boys at college, gay soft cushions, pipes and mandolins scattered about.

I lingered for a smoke and a chat with my host on the ground floor in an oak panelled room like the library of a gentleman's club before leaving.

I came away with (I very much fear) an idea that I should like to go back tomorrow and see some one of my friends so agreeably buried from that place.

CHAPTER IX

WRITING IN ROOMS

I REMEMBER that I was somewhat surprised when E. V. Lucas expressed surprise that I was writing in my room at the hotel where we both happened to be at the same time for several days last summer. He declared with an expression of sharp distaste that he could not write in hotel rooms. But said he had no difficulty in writing on trains. That rather got me, because I can't write at all on trains. And possibly because I was a bit peeved at the easy way in which he spoke of doing that exceedingly difficult thing, writing on trains, I asserted in reply that anybody ought to be able to write in *any kind* of a room. But I do know, what every writer knows, that the particular room one may be in can make a good deal of difference in the way one is able to write.

Of course, it does appear to be true that there are writers of a kind that can write anywhere in any circumstances, apparently with equal fa-

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cility and their customary standard of merit, whatever that may be. I suppose war correspondents must be like that, and reporters for daily newspapers. We know that a good many war books were announced as having been written in dugouts, trenches, pill-boxes, tanks, submarines, hospitals, airplanes and so on. In the matter of some of them I should not undertake to dispute that they had even been written in asylums.

I have known, and known well, men of that type of mind which seemed to be so completely under control that at will it could be turned on or off, so to say, like the stream from a water faucet. My friend Joyce Kilmer had such a head. It has been told how some of his most moving poems—for one instance "The White Ships and the Red"—were the result of hurried newspaper assignments: how he could leave a poem in the middle of its composition, go out and lunch heartily for two hours, return and finish the writing of it; how early in his career he would walk up and down a room of his home in suburban New Jersey at two in the morning and dictate (without a pause) to his wife while carrying a shrilly crying child in his arms; how

one of the best of his "Sunday stories" was dictated directly after having been taken to a hospital with three ribs fractured by being hit by his commutation train—and how much more. A young man with a brain in perfect practical working condition. But even he was not free from the mysterious tricks of creative writing. For we know that after a daily round sustained for a number of years of high productivity, when he went into the war, which inspired countless others to *begin* writing, he suddenly ceased to write, practically altogether.

Poets and trains being up, brings to my mind my friend the Reverend Edward F. Garesché, S. J., a source of amusement to many of his friends because of his method of composition. He travels continually. Frequently he will excuse himself from a group with whom he is talking, go to his own seat, request the porter to bring him a card table, get out his travelling typewriter, rattle off several poems, return to his party and resume conversation at about where he had left off. Some of his poems are very good; some (I'm sorry to have to say) are—not so good.

And so round we come again to the matter of writing in rooms. We know how Booth Tar-

kington writes: in what he calls a "work spree," in a room upstairs at home, a pile of freshly sharpened pencils ready to his hand—and that, doubtless, he wouldn't be able to write anything in an office if he were to be hanged for not doing it. (Probably never goes to an office.) Meredith Nicholson, on the other hand, declares that the only way it is possible for him to write is to go regularly at nine o'clock every morning to an office he has downtown; where he tells anyone who may ask over the telephone that he'll be there until five in the afternoon.

There are persons who like to have others around them, moving about, while they write. And people there are who find it necessary to lock themselves up, and can have no one else in the room. Though in some cases such persons would not mind the bang of a bass-drum just the other side of the door. I know a man who had an office in lower Manhattan where for a considerable period just outside his open window a steam riveter was at work. Terrific it was, the way the noise of this machine smashed the air into tiny particles like a shower of broken glass. Callers who found this man contentedly writing would hold their ears and look at him with their

hair on end from amazement. A man of highly nervous organism, too; one who would be very upset if his typewriter had a pale ribbon, or be spoiled for the day if he couldn't find the right pen—worn over just to his liking at the point. But, after the first day or so, Mr. Soaping (name of the gentleman I'm telling you about) I know didn't hear the riveter at all.

Then those exist, Royal Cortissoz is one, who, dictating all they do, can have in the room while they work only their secretary. Frequently is it the case, too, that none but the amanuensis to whom they have been long accustomed will do. A stranger throws 'em completely off. A novelist I know, the writer of a very good style, who becomes very much fussed up, and is practically destroyed, when he suspects a secretary of giving critical attention to the manner of his prose. An embarrassing thing about most stenographers, I have found, is that they are greatly grieved if you say "'em" for "them," or anything like that. Or else they won't let you do such things at all, and edit everything pleasant back into perfectly good copy-book English. Some of them won't even let you split an infinitive.

Who was it, Voltaire, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, somebody, who could write only when elaborately got up in his satins and ruffles? It is what not long ago was called a bromidium to say that humorists are sad people. I'd probably be thought humorous if I should call myself any particular flier as a humorist, but this I know: wherever in my writing I may have approached being amusing that generally was written when I was considerably depressed. Forenoon is the best time for some to write; late at night for others. "Ben Hur," I seem to recall, was penned beneath a noble tree. At any rate, we frequently see pictures of novelists, particularly in England, at work in their gardens. The most familiar photographs, etchings, medallions and so on of Mark Twain and of Robert Louis Stevenson at work are those of them writing in bed. Now I can't (as some so take their breakfast) eat in bed; and I'm quite sure I should never be able comfortably to write anything there. I do not tell you how it is with me because I regard it as of deep interest to you to hear how it is with *me,* but merely to aid me in assembling a collection of facts concerning the freakishness

of writing, and to suggest to you how very different it may be with *you*.

And I couldn't write under a tree. One writer, perhaps, writes more easily in the winter than in the summer, or it is the other way round. The mind of one, it may be, is stimulated by the companionship of an open fire, and that of another (for aught I know) by the companionship of an ice-box. Personally, I think that it is well in writing for the weather to be cool enough to have the windows down; and that night is the best time, for the reason that your mind (or, at least, my mind) is more gathered together within the circle of light at your desk.

Frequently, however (as you know), after sitting for hours with your mind plumb stalled, it is not until shortly before your bed time that that eccentric engine, your brain, gets buzzed up. Then, probably, you can't call the thing off if you want to. I will tell you a story:

A man there is, of some renown as a writer, who started a new book early last spring. For some considerable time he had been much discouraged about his writing. Hadn't been able to make it go. Could only lift heavily and painfully one stilted sentence after another. Used

to take up now and then one or another of his early books and look into it. Marvelled how it was that he ever could have written such clever stuff. Like Swift when late in life he re-read "Gulliver," so did this man exclaim: "What a genius I had at that time!" He felt that the fire had gone out; his inner life seemed to have completely died; he was a hollow shell; could now neither receive nor impart anything worth half a jews-harp. When, one day, he heard rosy, young Hugh Walpole say of himself that of course what he had written was merely a beginning to what he felt he might do, this man looked at rosy, young Hugh Walpole with a deeply gloomy and very jealous eye.

But, lo! as I say, this man started this new book. It began as a series of articles for which he was to be paid—that was *why* it was begun at all. Now see! With him it was as Professor George Edward Woodberry says of Poe in his admirable "Life"—for a time his genius had "slept." With the start of the new book he awoke. It began to run right out of the ends of his fingers. Took (that book) hold of him completely. He couldn't leave it. Go to bed, have to get up and go at it again. Try to go

out for a round of exercise. After a block or so from his quarters, walk slower and slower. Miserable. Tortured. Turn back. Immediately happy again. Soon be back at work. Anybody who entangled him with an invitation anywhere enraged him beyond measure.

New book finished. Everything fine. Got another commission. Easy enough job. Set to at it. Empty vessel again! In despair. He'd make all sorts of excuses to himself to leave his place early in the morning to postpone beginning work. He'd go anywhere, with anybody, to keep as long as possible from facing that task again. Couldn't give any sensible explanation of his prolonged delay to the publishers. Kept putting them off again and again, with one cripple-legged excuse after another, in the hope that he'd come round. Matter became a disgrace.

Still queerer cases than that I know. Fellow who shared an apartment with me one time. When according to the accepted law of nature his mind should have been in a very bad way, then always was he at his best. After leading a regular, wholesome life for a period his mind would become dull, stale and unprofitable. When, following a very different sort of period,

he should in all reason have awakened with a splitting head, a swollen eye and a shaking hand, he would get up at about dawn one morning in rattling fine spirits, his mind as clear as a bell, and with an impassioned desire to work. Could, then, write like a streak. But doesn't William James touch upon such a matter as this somewhere?

And Stevenson, how wrong he got the thing! What is it he tells us as to the years of apprenticeship to writing:

> It is only after years of such gymnastic that one can sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice, and he himself knowing what he wants to do and (within the narrow limit of a man's ability) able to do it.

Only last night it was I was talking to Jesse Lynch Williams. He said nothing of "legions of words swarming to his call," nary a mention of "dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice." Instead, he asked if I found that writing came easier as time went on. No, he said, it seemed to him that writing became harder and harder the longer one wrote. That he had torn up everything he had done for a long while.

Always the paradox! Again, there are men

who write with astonishing ease, or at least with astonishing rapidity, and write well. Not so long ago I began a novel in collaboration with a writer known and admired from coast to coast, a frequent contributor to *The Bookman,* and one of the best. We were to do this thing turn and turn about, a chapter by me, then a chapter by him, and so on. For something like ten days I toiled over chapter one. I labored and I groaned. When it was finished I was spent. I handed him the manuscript; he stuffed it into his overcoat pocket and went whistling away. Returned within a few days and handed me a wad of copy covering, I think, three chapters. Again I toiled in the sweat of my brow. Gave him another chapter. When, after a couple of weeks or something like that, he returned and I had read what he had done I discovered that he had got people married that I hadn't known were yet born. The collaboration busted up.

My excellent friend does not like me to tell this story, because he thinks it represents me as the conscientious artist and him as the shallow scribbler. Well, that was not so; his chapters were far better than mine. Nevertheless, his name I shall not give; I'll merely say

that it has very much the sound of a name borne by one of the Elizabethan dramatists.

Then there is that sort of human head-piece which can only write when it absolutely has to. I allude to the magical instrument of coercion known as a "copy date." I know people, dozens of them, who having a month and a half ahead of them in which to do an article can't possibly get started on it until it is almost too late for them to get it in on time to go to press —when a mad frenzy seizes them, their indolence vanishes like mist before the rising sun, their minds open like a flower, and all is well.

And the "galley slaves," those poor devils who for years have lived under the whip of copy day every day. How they dream of the "real" things they might do, given time. If (they think) the Lord would only subsidize them! Now and then the Devil takes one of them and does this very thing. The happy man gets some sort of a sinecure. All he has to do is to go write. And (in all probability) that's all there is to that story. He is like those things Riley tells about who "swaller theirselves." He gets nothing written.

What do you write with? And why do you write with whatever it is you write with instead

of with something else? Why did Mr. Howells (in all the writing of his which I have seen) use a script-letter typewriter instead of a Roman-letter machine? Why does Mr. Le Gallienne do so much of his copy (if not all of it) by hand? Why is it that Mr. Huneker could never either dictate or learn to run a typewriter? How is it possible for those Englishmen—Swinnerton and Bennett, for instance—to put forth in a few months whole novels in the monkish hand of an illuminated missal? (I have seen the original manuscript of "The Old Wives' Tale," every page like a copper-plate engraving, and hardly a correction throughout.) And why is that it seems to me most natural to write some things with a pen, others with a pencil, most things on a typewriter, and yet again mix the use of all three implements in one composition? I cannot tell you.

Some authors, if they are going to write about a slum, have to go and live in a *slum* while they are writing about a slum. Other authors, if they are going to write about life in an Ohio town, go to Italy to write about life in an Ohio town. In his excellent book "On the Trail of Stevenson" Clayton Hamilton says:

TURNS ABOUT TOWN

Throughout his lifelong wanderings, Stevenson rarely or never attempted to describe a place so long as he was in it. For his selection of descriptive detail he relied always on the subconscious artistry of memory. He trusted his own mind to forget the non-essential; and he seized upon whatever he remembered as, by that token, the most essential features of a scene—the features, therefore, that cried out to be selected as the focal points of the picture to be suggested to the mind's eye of his readers.

The author of the thirteen volumes known as "The Chronicles of Barsetshire," a detailed picture of the English clergy of his time, had never associated with bishops, deans, and arch-deacons; he built them up (to use his own expression) out of his "moral consciousness."

But round to rooms again. Often has it been told how Anthony Trollope worked. How he accomplished so much—thirty-odd novels besides as many tales—by a method he recommended to all who wish to pursue successfully the literary career. In the drawing room of the Athenæum Club, in a railway carriage, or on the ocean, wherever he might be he seated himself for three hours as a limit, with his watch before him; and regularly as it marked the quarter hour he turned off two hundred and fifty words, undisturbed by any distraction about him. We know that the unlettered man of genius, John Bunyan, wrote his

immortal allegory "The Pilgrim's Progress" in Bedford jail. And there is being advertised now a book recently written in an American prison. And much writing has been done in garrets. Then here's our old friend George Moore. Again and again he has told of exactly the places it was necessary for him to live in while he wrote certain books. I open at random "Ave"; and I find this:

> I descended the hillside towards the loveliest prospect that ever greeted mortal eyes. . . . And I walked thinking if there were one among my friends who would restore Mount Venus sufficiently for the summer months, long enough for me to write my book.

Now, to be quite frank with you, I didn't intend to write this paper at all. You may remember that when I set out I was merely in disagreement with Mr. Lucas concerning the matter of writing in a hotel room. One thing (as it will) led to another; and the upshot has been all this pother. However, there are, I hope, no bones broken—and that's saying a good deal for any kind of a discussion in these unsettled times.

What I am coming to is (the fashionable thing to come to nowadays) the psychic. A fellow I know was much puzzled. He recently got back to 16 Gramercy Park from a trip around the

world. I saw him there having some toast and a pot of tea. He told me these interesting circumstances. He would be at a superbly appointed hotel in some city. Beautiful suite of rooms. Commodious bath-room with lovely bay-window. Everything to make for perfect mental and physical well-being. Impotent to write there. Later runs into some terrible dump of a lodging house. Horrible din of low noises all about. One dirty window looks out on scene of squalor. So cold at night has to put chair on bed and sit there to be nearer gas jet. Gets on wonderfully with writing. Strikes another place, handsomest of all; writes pretty well. Comes to most fearful place yet; can't write at all.

Couldn't make head nor tail of the matter, this fellow. Discussed the thing with many people. Finally found young woman who gave convincing explanation. It's like this: Undoubtedly you are, in any room, affected by something of the spirit which lingers there of former occupants. Maybe they were persons, whatever their station in life, sympathetic to your spirit—maybe not.

CHAPTER X

TAKING THE AIR IN SAN FRANCISCO

A FEW days ago, in the warm and brilliant winter sunlight there, I was strolling along the Embarcadero. Now all my life I have been very fond of roving the streets. . . .

And that confession reminds me:

I one time heard a minister (a clergyman of considerable force of eloquence) preach a sermon against streets. His idea seemed to be that streets were not good for one—that they were very bad places. He admonished mothers to keep their children "off the streets." He regarded it as very reprehensible in a wife for her to "gad the streets." The footpad (he said) plied the street at night, while the righteous were at home in bed. What so sad as "a child of the streets"? If we wished to describe a worthless canine we called it a "street dog." The outcast has his home in the streets. The drunkard makes his bed in the street. It was painful (I gathered)

for a civilized being to hear the "language of the street." And so on.

But I very much fear that the eloquence of this gentleman was greater than his Christianity. If we are to love our neighbors as we do ourselves, we will find him in greatest variety in the streets. If we are to give away our cloak, the beneficiary, I should think, would be a citizen much accustomed to the streets. And, as far as I can make out, there is more rejoicing in heaven over the arrival of a sister who has "walked the streets" than attends the reception of a nun.

Certainly I admit that roaming the streets (like everything else) can doubtless be overdone. Nevertheless, to most people, people of ordinary ways of life (like myself), I highly recommend the practice, as a most healthful exercise, as a pleasant course of profitable education, as a source of endless amusement, and as a Christian virtue. The trouble, I think, with most of us is not that we see too much of the streets but that we do not see as well as we might the streets we happen to be on. We do not read as we run.

So I would write an article In Praise of Streets.

As I was saying (when that minister switched

me off), I was strolling along the Embarcadero. Among all the different sorts of streets there are none I think more beguiling than those which lie along the water front of a town or a city. The water-front streets of all seaport cities, of course, partake very much of the same character. Particularly in the picturesque aspect of the shop windows.

Here along the rim of San Francisco Bay you pass the sparkling pier buildings (now and then of Spanish mission architecture) of the Toyo Kisen Kaisha Oriental S. S. Co., of the American Hawaiian S. S. Co., the Kosmos Line, and the Pacific-Alaska Navigation Co., among others. While on New York's West Street you see the structures of the White Star Line, the Cunard Line, the Red Star Line, erected in masonry of a sort of mammoth and glorified garage architecture, funnels and masts peeping over the top; and further down the frame sheds of the Morgan Line, the Clyde Steam Ship Company, Savannah Line, Lackawanna Rail Road, Hoboken Ferry, and so on. But the tastes of the sailor man as a shopper appear to be very much the same whether he is along the London docks, on West Street, by Boston piers or here on the Em-

barcadero. In this the West and the East do meet.

The æsthetic taste of the water front inclines, very decidedly, to the ornate. As (presumably) a present to a lady and a decoration for the home the favorite object seems to be a heavy china plate. A romantic landscape, or a moonlight scene, or perhaps a still life study of portly roses is "hand painted" in very thick pigment on its face. Its rim is plaited in effect, like the edge of a fancy pie, and through numerous openings in this rim is run a heavy ribbon by which to hang it on the wall.

Next in prominence in the window displays of water-front bazaars is the set of bleary-colored glass ware (upper edges bound in gold) which I take to be designed for the purpose of serving punch, or perhaps lemonade—a large bowl of warty surface, with a number of cups to match hanging from hooks at its brim.

The water front obviously is strong for the amenities, the arts and the refinements of life. Bottles of perfume (with huge bows of ribbon at their necks) are in great abundance in its shop windows; as also are packets of boudoir soap (Dawn Lilac seems to be the favorite), toilet

powders, silk initial handkerchiefs, opera glasses, ladies' garters of very fluffy design, feminine combs ornamented with birds in gilt, exceedingly high stand-up collars for gentlemen, banjos, guitars, mandolins, accordions (of a great variety of sizes), harmonicas, playing cards, dice and poker chips.

As for the rest of the display, it is a multifarious collection: rubber hip-boots, hair clippers, money belts, brogans, bandana handkerchiefs, binoculars, tobacco pouches, spools of thread, pitch-black plug tobacco, hand searchlights, heavy underwear, woolen sox, razor strops, tin watches, shaving brushes, elaborately carved pipes, trays of heavy rings, and here and there some quaint curiosity, such as a little model of a sailing ship in a bottle which it could not have entered through the mouth, or some such oddity as that.

One old friend of mine on West Street I missed on the Embarcadero. And that is (very battered and worn are the specimens of him which remain as the last of his noble race) the cigar-store wooden Indian.

And (I much regret) neither on the Embarcadero nor on any other water front in America do we have the rich costume ball effects that you

find about the docks of London. There (as you remember) about the East India and the West India docks may be observed tall, dark visaged figures in loosely flowing robes and brilliant turbans solemnly pushing along high laden trucks and, high above on the decks of ships, hauling away at ropes.

But on the shore side of the San Francisco water front, my fancy was much taken by the salt sea savor of the signs of the houses of entertainment—signs reminiscent of the jovial days of briny romance, echoed in the chantey in "Treasure Island," which has as its refrain:

Yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of rum.

I passed, among others, the Marine Café, the Navy Café, the Admiral Café, the Harbor Bar, and the Ferry Café.

I did not turn up Market Street, but went on around the nose of the peninsula, which is the foundation of San Francisco. I passed a three-masted ship, the *Lizzie Vance,* lying by her wharf, with men aloft in her rigging. Then I clambered up endless relays of rickety wooden stairs mounting Telegraph Hill. On either side of the ladder-like steps, ramshackle cabins bedecked with

lines of fluttering "wash." Like the celebrated editor of *Puck,* H. C. Bunner, I might say that in my travels I've missed many a cathedral but I never missed a slum.

I went along through the Latin Quarter, slid down the steep slope of Kearny Street, and found myself wandering into that quaint little park, Portsmouth Square, where R. L. S. in his most stressful days lounged in the sun and listened to the tales of the vagabonds of the Seven Seas. Somewhat bigger than tiny Gramercy Park, hardly as large as little Madison Square, this park. In the center of the bit of rolling lawn, before a towering screen of rustling trees, the graceful little stone ship, buoyant on its curling stone wave, rides atop its tall stone pedestal graved "To Remember Robert Louis Stevenson," and on the face of which is cut that most fragrant of creeds, which (as everyone knows) begins: "To be honest, to be kind, to earn a little and to spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence" . . .

Behind the bench on which I rested was the establishment, so proclaimed the legend printed on its front, of Wing Sun, Funeral Director. For, as you know, Portsmouth Square is em-

braced on one side by prosperous Chinatown, and on the other by the Italian quarter of San Francisco. And the races, Latin and Oriental, mingle in the little park to take the air.

What here is still more colorful and picturesque, frequently there is a striking and amusing mixture of races in the costume of an individual figure. A Manchu lady, it may be, of waxen, enigmatic features, draped in flowing black silken trousers, hobbles along on high-heeled, pearl-colored American shoes. And there a slim reed of an Oriental maiden, with a complexion like a California orange, whisks by in the smartest of tailored suits—without a hat, her gleaming black hair done in Chinese fashion, long ornamented rods thrust through it, a vivid pendant of bright blossoms at one side of the head.

Sitting there, I thought of the nature of public parks and what pleasant places they are.

Splendid thing, elaborate park "systems," whereby you may go for miles through a grimy city, and move among groves and meadows and bosky dells, with inspiriting glimpses of mirror-like ponds and flashing streams all the way. And of course I enjoy the great parks of a great city.

But more appealing to me than the gorgeous

spectacle of Hyde Park, or Van Cortlandt, or Fairmont, or Jackson, or Forest Park are the little places tucked here and there in the seething caldron of the town. These are a lovely department of the streets—they are the little parlors of the streets. Here calls are made, and infants sun themselves—they have, these parklets, their social and their domestic life, under the democratic heavens.

Now soon is a time to watch with joy these plots of open space in the city's rushing life. Spring is more winsome on Boston Common and at Union Square than in the country. A tuft of green shoots seen against canyon walls of steel and stone—one must be in the city to savor the tenderness of spring.

And when summer comes and (in our eastern climate) all the town swelters under a blanket of gritty dust and heavy heat, then one comes upon one of these small areas of greenery with the refreshment of spirit with which at the meal hour one greets the appearance of a nice, cool, green salad.

I arose from my seat in Portsmouth Square and wandered off for the rest of the day through the Streets.

CHAPTER XI

BIDDING MR. CHESTERTON GOOD-BYE

THE note, which came altogether as a surprise, read: "My husband suggests that if you have nothing better to do perhaps you would look in upon us on Wednesday evening at about eight-thirty." Mrs. Chesterton further said, in giving the address, that they had a little apartment lent to them for the last week of their stay here. She had asked Mr. Woollcott to come, too, and Gerald Stanley Lee. . . . "We can only promise you smokes and talk."

I wondered, as I hurried for the 'bus, whether I'd have time to get my shoes polished. It was precisely the hour appointed when I reached what I took to be the door. The hall-man declared that he had "gone out." I insisted that the hall-man telephone up. "No answer," he said, after a bit, and hung up. Now what do you think of that! Well, I'd take a walk and return a little later.

As I was rounding the corner coming back I saw an agile, rotund figure, with a gleam of white shirt-front in the half darkness, mounting the dusky steps instead of descending into the lighted areaway. Looked kinda like Mr. Woollcott. If so, the gentleman was going wrong, so I called to him.

"He has not come back," the hall-man asserted, but assented to our demands to ring up again. No response. "It was about an hour ago he went out," he replied to our question. Standing there, Mr. Woollcott and I contrived several theories. One was that Mr. Chesterton had intended to return by now but had lost track of the time. Another was that possibly Mrs. Chesterton had invited us on her own hook and had overlooked notifying Mr. Chesterton of the matter. "Has a third gentleman been here?" we asked, meaning Mr. Lee. No. We went for a stroll.

It was nine o'clock. And Mr. Woollcott's manner indicated that he was inclined to take some sort of revenge on the hall-man. Was he, the hall-man, certain that he had everything straight? "Sure," he nodded; "it's Mr. Cushman's apartment." Mr. Cushman's apartment! Had we, then, been blundering in the wrong place

all this time! "Mr. Chesterton!" roared Mr. Woollcott. Yes, yes; he understood that . . . the gentleman had come in yesterday. That was right according to the note I had had from Mrs. Chesterton; so we demanded that the man make another effort at the telephone. Ah! . . . he heard something. "It's all right," he mumbled; "they are there."

As we got out of the car Mr. Chesterton was cramming the tiny hall. He was in an attitude which I took to be that of a bow, but I later discovered, as he shuffled back and forth about the apartment, that he walks that way all the time now when in the privacy of his own quarters. Mrs. Chesterton greeted us as we entered the room, Mr. Chesterton trailing in behind us and continuing a welcoming murmur which had somewhat the sound of a playful brook. Mrs. Chesterton ensconced herself behind a tea table. Mr. Chesterton lumbered about with cigars. He disclaimed the great easy chair by the electric table lamp in which it was unmistakable that he had been sitting, but was prevailed upon to return to it.

In apology for the lateness of our arrival we mentioned our difficulties in discovering that he

was in. Mr. Chesterton seemed bewildered by the circumstance. He shook his head and (evidently referring to the hall-man) said he was not able to understand "that foreigner" at all. "That foreigner?" we smiled at the Englishman. I think it most likely that the explanation of his not having heard our earlier rings was that he was not familiar with the system of bells in the apartment. They had not been out, he declared; oh, yes! they had been out, too, a good while ago, to get something to eat. "We are camping here," he said, "in a rather Bohemian fashion." Didn't they enjoy that as a change from life in fashionable hotels? Oh, yes! Very much.

They wondered if Mr. Lee were not coming. Yes; he had assured me that he was, when I had seen him that afternoon at the club. In fact, we had discussed what we would wear, and had agreed on dinner jackets. Mr. Chesterton was wearing a braid-bound cutaway coat of felt-like material (very much wrinkled in the skirt) and dark striped trousers of stiffish quality, but not recently pressed. His bat-wing collar had a sharp crease extending outward at one side as though it were broken. Though it was a very warm night for early spring—a hot night, in-

deed—he wore uncommonly heavy woolen sox, which were very much "coming down" about his ankles. His comically small English eye-glasses, with a straight rod joining them across the top, were perpetually coming off his nose. On one finger he wore a rather large ring. I noticed that for so large a man his hands were somewhat small, and were delicately made. At one side of him were three ashtrays (one of them a huge brass bowl well filled with tobacco ash) and at the other side of him one tray.

Well, what sort of a time had he been having? How far west had he got? He had been as far as (I think) Omaha. "Halfway across," he said. He had been much mystified by a curious character he had run into there: a strange being whose waistcoat and coat front were covered by symbolic emblems, crescents, full moons and stars. This person had accosted him in the street saying, "And so you are a lecturer." The man had then informed him that he also was a lecturer. He lectured, he said, on astronomy. "Indeed, in my country," Mr. Chesterton had said, "it is not the custom for astronomers to display on their person devices symbolic of the science in which they are engaged." Next, the man had opened his coat

and exhibited the badge of a sheriff, or some sort of officer of the peace. Mr. Chesterton had been astounded to discover the functions of a man of science, a lecturer and a policeman united in one and the same person. It was quite evident that this (as I assume he was) harmless lunatic had made a most decided impression upon Mr. Chesterton's mind; he took the eccentric individual with much seriousness, apparently as some kind of a type; indeed, I feared that we would never get him switched off from talking about him; and I have no doubt that, in the course of time, this ridiculous astronomer will appear as a bizarre character in some fantastic tale, a personage perhaps related to Father Brown, or something like that.

Mr. Chesterton observed that he had enjoyed the opportunity of seeing various grades of American life, that he had been in the homes of very humble people as well as in houses of persons of wealth and social and intellectual position. In a former article I noted how Mr. Chesterton had been greatly startled to find (what he then called) "wooden houses" in this country, and such multitudes of them. He now returned to this phenomenon. What was his one outstanding impres-

sion of the United States? Well, he remarked that he had said it before, but he continued to be chiefly struck by the vast number of "frame houses" here.

Mr. Lee arrived. A gentleman who looks very much as though you were looking at his reflection in one of those trick mirrors (such as they have at Coney Island) which humorously attenuate and elongate the figures before them. Or, again, perhaps more justly still, a gentleman who looks as though Daumier had drawn him as an illustration for "Don Quixote." In his evening clothes (to put it still another way), a gentleman who looks much like a very lengthened shadow dancing on a wall. Mr. Whistler would have made something very striking indeed out of Mr. Lee in a dinner coat, something beautifully strange. I do not know that I have ever seen anything finer, in its own exceedingly peculiar way, than Mr. Lee, thus attired, with a cup of tea in his hand.

"Do you like wine?" Mr. Woollcott asked Mr. Chesterton, and told him of a restaurant nearby where this could be obtained. Our prohibition, Mr. Chesterton said, did not bother him so much as might be thought, as for reasons having to do

with his health he was (as you or I would say) "off the stuff" at present.

One of us, Mr. Woollcott I think, commented upon the sweep of Mr. Chesterton's fame in the United States. The opinion was advanced that the evening of the day he landed his arrival was known in every literate home in New York. Mr. Chesterton was inclined to think that his "notoriety" in large measure came from his "appearance," his "avoirdupois." Knowledge of him had spread through the notion that he was a "popular curiosity." It was contended that his writing had been well-known over here ten years before his pictures became familiar to us. (Though, of course, I myself do think that the pictorial quality of his corporeal being has been very effective publicity for him.)

Then there was another thing which Mr. Chesterton thought might to a considerable degree account for his American celebrity. That was this "tag" of "paradox." People loved "easy handles" like that, and they went a long way. Somehow or other we let this point pass, or it got lost in the shuffle, and the discussion turned to the question of whether there was an American writer living whose arrival in England would command

anything like the general attention occasioned by Mr. Chesterton's entrance into the United States. We could not think of anyone.

Mark Twain, of course; yes. O. Henry, doubtless, too. And, indeed, in the matter of years O. Henry might very well be living now. Mr. Chesterton quite agreed as to the English welcome of Mark Twain or of O. Henry. Tom Sawyer and Huck, he said musingly, certainly were "universal." Then, ponderingly, he observed that English and American literature seemed to be getting farther and farther apart, or more and more distinct each from the other. That is, he remembered that when he was a boy his father and his uncles simply spoke of a new book having come out whether it had been written in England or in the United States. As in the case of the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table": when it appeared it was enjoyed and talked about by everybody in England; but not spoken of there as a new American book: it was a new book, that's all. Now, however, with Englishmen impressed by the "Spoon River Anthology," "and rightly so," or by "Main Street," "it would not be that way."

He had much liking for O. Henry. But he

had begun by not liking him. He had been puzzled by the "queer commercial deals" on which so many of the stories turned—"buying towns, selling rivers." He had, even now, to re-read much of the slang to get the meaning. And so we talked awhile of slang.

"You have an expression here," said Mr. Chesterton, shaking his head as though that were something very remarkable indeed, *"a bad actor."* Much mirth from Woollcott, Lee and Holliday. "Now in England," Mr. Chesterton continued, "we mean by that one who has mistaken his vocation as to the stage. But I discovered that here it has nothing to do with the theatrical profession." Then, it developed, some reporter in the West had referred to him as "a regular guy." At first Mr. Chesterton had been for going after the fellow with a stick. . . . Certainly a topsy-turvy land, the United States, where you can't tell opprobrium from flattering compliment.

Then one of us told Mr. Chesterton a story of a prize line of American slang. He (the teller of the story) had got a letter in which a friend of his had been spoken of in a highly eulogistic fashion. Thinking this opinion of him would please his friend this man showed the letter to

him. The gentleman so much praised in it read the letter and remarked: "Well, whenever I get the hand I always see the red light." Mr. Chesterton looked dazed. "You'll have to translate that to me," he said. It was explained to him that the meaning of this was that whenever this person heard applause of himself he always scented danger. "Oh, oh! I see!" crowed Mr. Chesterton, "the hand, the hand," and he began clapping his hands in illustration of the figure with much glee.

"Glee," yes. And "crowed," also. They are the words, some of the words, to describe Mr. Chesterton's sounds. His utterance was rapid, melodious. The modulations of his softly flowing voice had curiously somewhat the effect of a very cheerful music-box. His easy and very natural command of a great multitude of words was striking. And yet there was something decidedly boyish about the effect of his talk. I think the cause of this was, for one thing, the rather gurgling enjoyment with which he spoke, and for another thing, in his impulsive concern for the point of his idea he frequently did not trouble to begin nor end sentences. He just let 'er go. But the fundamental source of this boyishness

of spirit I think was this: I do not believe I have ever seen a man who had borne the brunt of life for some forty-five years and still retained such complete, abounding, unaffected and infectious good humor as Mr. Chesterton.

"As I believe I have said somewhere before," Mr. Chesterton was saying, "it seems to me that the best known character in literature is Sherlock Holmes." Mr. Woollcott was inclined to consider Svengali. Dear me! Svengali may have been in the running at one time, but it strikes me that today he has pretty much gone by the board, somewhat to mix the figure.

As to detective stories: "They are essentially domestic," declares Mr. Chesterton. "Intimate, all in the household, or ought to be. The children's nurse should murder the Bishop. These things where the Foreign Office becomes involved and" (chuckling) "Indian rajahs and military forces come in are never right. They are too big. The detective story is a fireside story."

Had Mr. Chesterton been much to the theatre while here? No; the only thing he had seen was "The Bat." Something like anguish on the face of the dramatic critic of the New York *Times*. Why, he, Mr. Chesterton, had liked "The Bat,"

a good deal. Speaking of plays, the American presentation of "Magic" came into the conversation. It was remarked that the extremely mystical character of the setting rather crushed the mysticism of the play itself. The idea was advanced that a very simple, matter-of-fact, even bleak setting, would have been the thing to act as an effective foil to this play. Mr. Chesterton seemed to be not the slightest interested in stage-settings. And he knew next to nothing at all about the career of "Magic." He wasn't even sure whether or not he held any proprietary rights in the play. There was, he said as though fumbling around in his mind, something involved about the matter. Friend of his wanted a play. Necessary to finish it in a hurry. He didn't really know, answering a question to this purpose, whether or not he received any royalties from it.

Mrs. Chesterton again handed about some fudge. The collection of ash-trays and bowls surrounding Mr. Chesterton had become jovially freighted with tobacco ash and cigar ends. He smoked his cigars in an economical fashion, down as far as they could comfortably be held.

There was one thing (the talk had turned to

his lecturing) Mr. Chesterton "wished you wouldn't do in this country, or that we didn't do in England, either." That was for the gentleman who "introduced" a lecturer to refer to his "message." In his own case, for instance, how ridiculously was this term misapplied. The word "message" conveyed something "quite the opposite of personality." Or, that is, before its popular corruption it had meant something very different. It meant that something was carried. One with a message was a messenger, a vessel, an envelope. It was hard to think of a figure who could rightly be said to have a message. The Old Testament prophets, Mohammed, perhaps. Whitman, now certainly you couldn't say that Whitman had a message.

A ring; and Mr. Cushman came in. Youthfully cropped grey hair. A gentleman who looked like a habitual first-nighter.

Yes, Mr. Chesterton was telling us, it was a curious thing. He had always heard that Americans worshipped machines. A machine everywhere here, and a machine brought to an amazing state of mechanical perfection, was the elevator, as we called it. When he had first got into an American elevator he had been arrested by

the fact that the men entering it took off their hats and stood silently with bared heads as it ascended. It is so, he had said to himself, they are at worship, at prayer, this is some religious rite, mystic ceremony, the elevator is their temple.

Had he been in our subway? was asked. No; he had been down in a station one time, but he had not ridden on one of the trains. I wish now that I had thought to cut into the rapid battledore and shuttlecock of the conversation to learn why he had not been. Was he scared of 'em?

What were the things which Mr. Chesterton particularly liked in the United States? Well, for one thing, he very much liked the "elevated." He thought it was grand up in the air that way.

And what had be especially *disliked?* Mr. Lee apparently had knowledge of a memorandum book kept by Mrs. Chesterton, known to their intimate little circle as her "Book of Likes and Dislikes." She was, with some difficulty, prevailed upon to read from this—which she did very guardedly, clutching the book very firmly before her. Among the things put down in it as not liked were ice cream, ice water, "American boots" (by which was meant women's high-heeled shoes), and interviewers, reporters and camera

men. Things especially liked included parlor-car seats. Mr. Chesterton: "I don't dislike it, now. I've got the evil habit of ice water."

"Lift," it was generally agreed, was a happier word than "elevator." Mrs. Chesterton thought that the scientific, technical, correct, or whatever you call them, words for things always took all the feeling of life out of them. "Aviator," for example, had no color at all. But how fine in the spirit of the thing was the popular term "flying-man," or "fly-man"!

The conversation had got momentarily divided into groups. Mr. Chesterton was heard saying to Mr. Woollcott, "The time I mean was when Yeats was young—when mysticism was jazz."

Just how he got started in on them I do not recall. He began with Belloc's most entertaining and highly vivacious ballad which has the refrain, "And Mrs. James will entertain the king"; a kind of a piece among friends, which unfortunately is not in any book. He recited with a kind of joyous unction, nodding his head forward and back from side to side, thus keeping time to the music of the verse, punctuating the close of each stanza with bubble of chuckles. On and on and on and on he went through goodness

knows how many bits of rollicking literary fooling.

It was half past eleven. I saw Mr. Chesterton, when someone else was speaking, yawn slightly now and then. The four callers arose to go. Some one of us asked Mr. Chesterton if he expected to be back in America soon. Through a wreath of smiles he replied that he was not getting a return ticket on the boat.

The two of them were framed in their doorway as we got into the "foreigner's" car. Mrs. Chesterton called to us that she hoped to see us all in England, "singly or together." As the car dropped from their floor both were beaming a merry, friendly farewell.

Suddenly it struck me that they were very like a pair of children—they were so happy, so natural, so innocent of guile, and obviously so fond of one another.

CHAPTER XII

NO SYSTEM AT ALL TO THE HUMAN SYSTEM

I THINK I'll tell you about myself. Maybe it's the same way with you. Anyhow, it's a mighty queer thing. And we ought to try to get some light on the matter—why there is, apparently, no reason or logic at all about our systems.

You see, I go along a pretty fair amount of the time feeling all right; nothing wrong with my system; nothing, at any rate, that I can notice. Everybody says: "How well you're looking! Great color, you've got." And so on.

Then, maybe, I see in the paper that there is an epidemic scheduled to devastate the city pretty soon. This news lays hold of me right off. The paper goes on to say that it behooves all citizens to take thought to fortify their systems against the ravages of this terrible disease which is rapidly approaching.

Or I read, say, that Thrift Week was such an

enormous success (for everybody else) that a campaign is under way to inaugurate a Health Week, which (I read) will greatly reduce the mortality in the community. The way to reduce my own mortality (I read with considerable attention) is for me to Stop, Look and Listen in the matter of my health. And To Do It Now! I don't like those profane words, like mortality. They disturb me. And occasionally get me into no end of trouble—as you'll see.

Or, perhaps, I notice around in cars and places an unusual number of advertisements instructing you what firm to consult in order to "safeguard the interests of your heirs." A died (one of these cards may say) and left his estate to B, his widow, naming C as executor. C died suddenly shortly afterward. B (the widow) met E, with oil lands in Hawaii—and so on. The advertisement winds up: Are you A?

Not yet; I'm not! But I'd better watch out. I know this is a good advertisement because it gets into my mind the way it does.

Or, again, perhaps there are just a number of little things that I come across. A gentleman one day tells me at luncheon, we'll say, that he can't drink tea because it gives him uric acid so

bad. Good gracious! And I (maybe) subject to uric acid!

An octogenarian (we'll suppose) is interviewed. He attributes his longevity to abstemiousness in the use of inexpensive cigarettes. (I at once put mine out.)

A chemist (very likely) gets a lot of publicity by declaring that you are to Look Before You Leap in the matter of drinking water. (And but the night before I drank from the spout in the kitchen!) And so on. Well, things such as these set one to thinking.

I say to myself when I get that way (to thinking, I mean) a stitch in time saves nine; there's no loss so bad as the loss of your health, because if you have that you can obtain aught else; a word to the wise is sufficient; make hay while the sun shines; little drops of water wear away the stone; take heed for the morrow while it is yet May; be not like unto the foolish virgin who spilt the beans. And many other things of this kind, which (doubtless in wise measure) are both good and true.

Well, in short, I determine to "build up," to get myself in thoroughly "good shape."

I swear off smoking. I put away the home

brew. I do not eat fresh bread. I procure myself overshoes against the rain. I rise with the lark. I (religiously eating an apple first) go to bed betimes. I walk so many miles a day—also skip a rope. I shun all delicacies of the table. I take those horrid extra cold baths, for the circulation. I do "deep breathing." I "relax" for twelve minutes each day. I shun the death-dealing demon "worry." I "fix my mind on cheerful thoughts." I "take up a hobby," philately, or something like that. I eat the skins of potatoes. I watch the thermometer at the office, and monkey continually with the steam radiator. Everything like that.

When you undertake a thing (even if it's only shelling peas) be thorough in it, that's my motto. I don't, indeed, in this regimen get much work done, but it's better to be slow and sure.

Well, what happens?

When I set out to build up this is what happens to me: First thing, maybe, I get pimples. No; no maybe about it. I sure get pimples. Then, very likely, I get a carbuncle. (I have just asked my assistant how you spell that word. She inquires if I mean the gem, or—or the other. I have told her I mean the other.)

Next, very probably, I "contract" (as they say) a cough. This cough "develops" into a cold. . . . You have (I trust) had that sort of cold which hangs on for months. Nothing recommended is of any help to you. You become resigned (more or less) to the idea—just as a man who has lost a leg (or his mind) must resolve to do the best he can with the rest of his life without his leg (or his mind), so must you adapt yourself to the stern condition imposed by Fate of always having a cold. That's the kind of a cold I mean that I get. (Only worse!)

My cold branches out into several little side lines, such as acute neuralgia and inflammatory rheumatism. Stiff joints impede my agility in getting down the hill to my morning train to the city. I slip on the ice and break my glasses.

Not having my glasses causes me at the office to greet Mr. Sloover as Mr. Rundle, and this sort of error breathes a chill upon the nice nuances of business.

Or in my personal correspondence (if I were that kind of a person) I might put my letter for Penelope into the envelope for Pauline. This, when I had discovered the calamity, would doubtless perturb my thoughts. My thoughts being

perturbed, I might walk out of the restaurant without my change of three dollars and eighty cents. Thoroughly upset by now, I walk under a ladder. Realizing that I have done this, my nervousness is the occasion of my dropping my watch. Enough! I recognize that there is no use in my going back to the office that afternoon. I telephone in that I have gone home to bed with my cold.

On coming out of the cigar store where the telephone booth is, I see Christopher Morley, Don Marquis and Franklin P. Adams walking down the street arm in arm. (I can see very little without my glasses, but well enough to recognize such a spectacle as that.) Something, I say, must be on. And I cheer up considerably. Some cheering up certainly is just what I need. I overhaul the company. And I ask it (the company) where it is bound. It says: "For 'Mecca.' Come along." Don hands me a pocket flask (largely empty), Chris presents me with a large green cigar, and Frank gives me a match. It is agreed that we roll a little pool for a few hours while waiting for the cab.

Well, you see, I've been led to abandon the

idea of building up my health—but I don't care, one may as well die happy.

I have a great time at that show. (My cold is immensely better.) I fix on one eye-glass so as to see something desirable. And I cut up a lot.

But—when we turn to leave I discover the president of my company going out just ahead of me. Well, I suppose I'll have to take what is coming to me tomorrow.

That one good meal, anyhow (after the pool), has strengthened my spirit immensely. I plan to have a regular, genuine breakfast in the morning. The kind I used to enjoy before I started in to get myself in fine shape. A breakfast of sliced pineapple, eggs, steak, fried potatoes, cottage-cheese, hot rolls, and two pots of good strong coffee. A pipe afterward.

When I get out to the house I find that my uncle (from whom I had been estranged for years) has died, and left me his fine, ninety carat, forty jewel, repeater watch.

I wake up bursting with joyous life. The girl tells me that those especially handsome glasses I lost last New Year's Eve have been found. Down at the station the station-master comes out

to greet me. He says so many people have slipped on our hill that next week the railroad is going to install a free coach service. I see by the morning paper that the horse I took a twelve to one shot on in the Buenos Aires derby came out the length of the stretch to the good. On the train into town I smoke a couple of packages of cigarettes—as I become a bit bothered about the situation at the office.

A girder, or something, had fallen across the track. The train is held up. For a couple of hours it stands there. I become more than decidedly nervous. Now this is awful bad doings. Everything had been coming so right again. It seems as if there is no reward in this world for anything. Here for a whole month or so I had been subjecting myself to the most rigorous and unpleasant kind of discipline solely in order to make myself more efficient in my work, and so more valuable to the house. Nothing else. Then by an accident I am kept away from the office one afternoon, and this has to go and happen just to keep me away probably the whole of the forenoon. Everything will, of course, be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Instead of getting just credit for what I've done, I'll probably get

bounced. If anyone wants to have the moral of this story pointed out to him: it is that there is not much use in trying, you can see that.

When I do get to the office my secretary is in quite a flurry. She tells me that Mr. Equity, the president, has been inquiring for me. In fact—she hesitates—wants me to step in to see him as soon as I arrive.

So, there you are!

Mr. Equity (a most unusual thing in any circumstances) shakes my hand with great cordiality. He smiles, not benignantly but rather deferentially. Says that he has recognized for some little time that I have not had a salary commensurate with my services. Times, however, are not of the best. Would I be willing to continue with the firm at—a pause—well, double my present salary? Everything, he adds, would be made as pleasant for me as possible.

His secretary whispers to me in an outer office: "He has been so flustered. He was scared you weren't ever coming back."

I discussed this matter of the strange workings of the human system with a friend of mine outside the office. "Ah!" he said, "you didn't per-

severe long enough in looking after yourself. If you had kept it up for a year instead of only a month, you'd be a well man today. And," he added seriously, "a successful man, too."

CHAPTER XIII

SEEING THE "SITUATIONS WANTED" SCENE

"WHAT a lot of things they put in the papers!" Hilaire Belloc observes somewhere in one of his essays. Indeed, it is so!

I fear, however, that one of the features "they" put in the papers does not have anything like as popular a reading as it deserves to have. Those of the governing class, personages who employ people, probably consult fragments of this department of the newspaper now and then. But, it may fairly be claimed, nobody reads, with the delicious pleasure and the abundant profit he might read, that part of the paper fullest of all of, so to say, meat and gravy.

The story it tells is probably the deepest grounding in life to be found in print. There as it stands in today's paper Shakespeare (I fancy) could not have written it, nor Balzac, nor Dickens, nor Arnold Bennett, nor O. Henry, nor Sinclair Lewis. This newspaper feature is

called "Situations Wanted." It might just as accurately be called "The Human Scene," or "The Heart of the World," or "The Cry of the Soul." Its tale is of what all men are seeking (and have ever sought), each in his own degree, and after his fashion—bread, a place in the sun, a level higher than that of today.

Let us, briefly, survey this Page of Life.

The most conspicuous figure in the vast and motley throng is the Bold and Confident Man. He that knows his superior worth and does not propose to hide his light, he that has the spirit to attack the conqueror. His method is to fling a large and arresting headline across his "ad." "I AM THE MAN YOU WANT!" he begins. Or, "PAR-EXCELLENCE," he announces in big type. Or, "Mr. Busy Manufacturer," he says in good sized "caps"; in smaller letters asks: "Are you in need of *a competent manager?*" If Mr. B. M. is in such need, it is squarely put up to him: he "will do well to address X." To the employer who hesitates this vital opportunity is lost. The ad says: "Write now—*Right Now!*" Undoubtedly this is the horse to put your money on; the hero to marry your daughter to. He will not want.

"SITUATIONS WANTED" SCENE

Our bold, aggressive friend frequently writes, barring a bit of "bounce," an admirable, clean-cut account of himself. He has, he declares, acted for some of the leading concerns in the country; he has never yet failed to give satisfaction; every employer he ever had will testify to his ability and character. He invites the closest investigation of his record, and he is open for any engagement where faithful work, absolute integrity and devotion to his employer's interests will be productive of "a fair living salary." It is, indeed, difficult to avoid the impression that this man "has the goods."

Akin to him in his method of a bill-board-like headline is another, of whom one is not so sure. He does not so much command attention as seek to beguile it. His particular "lay" is the Ingenious. Here is one example of his style:

AN ADVERTISING ADVENTURER

offers 16 years' experience

(scarred by a few notable defeats and a thorough knowledge edge of what NOT to do) to a manufacturer, for whom he will SAVE more than his wages; a bad man, who does not drink, never was out of work, is married and proud of it; age 32; would rather work than eat. Address: Alert.

Then there is the Challenge Not to Be Denied. Here is a sample: "*Accountant.*—Are you one of

the progressive firms? If you are, you want ——" etc. Frequently one comes across the Facetious Advertiser. He runs some such headline as this: *"Editor for Rent."* Or perhaps he says: *"'Secretarial Services' For Sale."* In contrast to him is the advertiser with the Tremulous Appeal. He may begin: *"Who Wants My Services?"* And go on to say: "I am hard worker and steady, and willing to go anywhere. Salary about $12 a week." Or perhaps he says: *"Privilege* of meeting man who can utilize my services." Or maybe it is thus: "$15 per Week and an Opportunity." Such a very human ad as this is likely to continue somewhat like this:

Can you use a young man of twenty-one—one of really serious purpose? I have had enough business experience and training to know that to be of help I must do well whatever I am given to do. Of course I am looking for a future—but I know that it does not matter so much what I do as how I do it. Therefore, I believe any reputable business holds a future. I am from Kansas, in New York on my own resources and so must have $15 per week to start. I have a high school education, and have read a great deal, and have attended Business School.

Next is the Poignant ad. The purest example of this which in my studies I have discovered is headed: *"Who Will Talk With Me?"* A step

beyond this we come upon the Altogether Pitiful. I mean like the one I here copy out:

> WILL you please find or give office employment to an educated, with physical defect, young man; just a chance to work two weeks without salary desired?

Akin to the poignant situation-wanted advertisement is the Urgent: "*Advertising Writer,* college man (Princeton), urgently needs situation." Or: "*Proofreader,* educated young man, requires position *immediately.*" It is, such is the inference, defective philanthropy in an employer to delay. A touching figure, too (because he does not suspect that he is a touching figure), is the Cheery and Hopeful. We have him here: "*Ambitious* young American (28) desires position; will try anything; moderate salary to start."

A wily fellow is the Ingratiating advertiser. Sometimes he is a "Spanish young man" who offers to work altogether without salary as Spanish correspondent in some export house "where he could practice English." Occasionally he is a "copy writer" who, wishing a position with an agency or mercantile firm, is "willing to demonstrate ability for two weeks before drawing salary." Now and then a still more positive

character baits the hook with the offer of gratis services. In this morning's paper a stenographer releases the seductive declaration that "one trial will demonstrate my value to you."

A rôle played on the stage of the "Situations Wanted" page which I have always much admired is that of the Highly Dignified. The Bold and Confident Man, the Ingenious, the Tremulous, the Poignant, the Hopeful, the Ingratiating—the voices of all these figures touch one with a sense of the harsh clash of life, its trickiness, its vicissitudes, its pathos and its tragedy. But "*A Gentleman* of 50," who, "having a considerable private income, desires dignified occupation; salary unimportant," revives the poetic idea that (at any rate, now and then) God's in His heaven and all's right with the world. The highly dignified advertiser certainly is a very enviable character. It must be very nice to be able to say, as in this advertisement before us: "*Light Occupation of an Important Nature* is sought by middle-aged gentleman capable of assuming control and conducting any normal business enterprise."

A very colorful feature of the "Situations Wanted" page is the interesting qualifications

frequently set forth. Glancing at the paper in hand I find a young man of twenty-five who seeks a "permanent position" with a publisher recommending himself as being "affable." Also here is a "refined gentleman" who desires a "compatible" position and lists among his accomplishments skill in the art of "tasty drawing." A "keen discreet American" looking for a job with a "corporation" mentions his "suave manners." A butler unemployed regards himself as "very nice." A college graduate of twenty-eight who wants to "begin at the bottom" asserts that he is a "fluent talker." A "young man with literary ability" flings out the intimation that he "desires position where it will be of some use." A dressmaker states that in her calling she is "perfect." A clerk is "very smart at figures." A nurse puts forward her asset as a "plain writer." You are pleased to discover that so many people have a "pleasing personality." And that among stenographers there are so many who may be described (they say) as an "attractive young girl." Here is one who introduces herself as both "prepossessing" and "brainy." A "woman of education" who seeks occupation at "anything useful if there is friendliness" gives

as her leading characteristic a "sense of humor." Now and then the recommendations offered somewhat mystify me, as in the advertisement of the lady, "age 29, fine personality (widow of P. M. of F. and A. M.)." Then there is that great company who have but one merit to display. They may be represented in the "Female" column by the *"Respectable* young woman" who "wishes day's work." And in the "Male" column by the *"Sober* man" who (simply) "desires position." Sometimes here it is difficult to determine the degree of sobriety maintained, as in the frequent advertisement of the chauffeur who discreetly states that he is "temperate."

In case you should write down your idea of your own "appearance," what would you say? I confess that such a problem would puzzle me. It does not puzzle some. "Situation Wanted" ads record that there are numerous young men of "exceptional appearance." Though occasionally we come upon a young man of almost painful conscientiousness who feels that he should not go further than to say that he is of "fair appearance."

The queer dissimilarity of human aspirations echoes through the "Situations Wanted" page.

"SITUATIONS WANTED" SCENE

Here is a *"Gentleman,* excellent education and personality, linguist," who wants a position as a companion, or "courier, &c." A *"Highly* educated French lady would gladly take a child for walks every day from 10 to 12." *A "Lady,* 27, of literary bent desires position as companion around the world." It is remarkable, the number of persons there are in the world of "literary" tendency. Remarkable, too, how many people with an inclination to travel. Here is a *"Cornell Graduate"* who has, apparently, no aversion whatever to spending the winter in "a warm climate." There are *"Two* young men, partners," who "wish to join an expedition, any destination." But there are home-keeping souls, too. A *"Cultured* elderly man, neat," craves "household duties." And so on.

What a rich variety of characters throng the populous scene of the "Situations Wanted" page! Here, in today's paper, following the advertisement of a "sculptor" comes that of a "former policeman." A *"Physician,* practicing twenty years in Paris, speaking English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, seeking situation," is cheek by jowl with a *"Plumber,* good all round man." A young man who has "put 9 years at sea as stew-

ard" nonchalantly asks "What have you?" A *"Former College Professor,* 30, seeks field of occupation in advertising." And a *"Cavalry* man, excellent record, wishes position at anything." A *"Cultured Visiting Governess* of good family, social position, trains ladies, English, grammar, literature, elegant correspondence, art of conversation, current events, social etiquette." A remarkable "gentleman" presents himself as "qualified to do most anything." And a "Christian, age 38," wishes a position as "manager of a laundry."

A strategic device frequently employed by the humble is that of getting someone whose position has weight to present them. For instance, "Rev. Dr. Moffett recommends a colored man for janitor of a loft building." And numerous are the gentlemen who, laying up their cars, are interested in placing their chauffeurs elsewhere.

"Boy" is perhaps the word which dominates the page. Most boys, apparently, are not particular in their choice of a calling. They are "willing to do anything." Now and then one declares that he is a "good fighter," or something like that. Here is one who demands a "position where mental ability will be necessary." Here

is another who is very specific, thus: "15½ years old, 5 feet 8¼ inches tall."

Sometimes one meets a very extraordinary character in these columns. The other day no less a distinguished person than this put in an ad:

I am compelled, through severe strain, to discontinue my work (involving the mental faculties) with which I have puzzled the scientific world for several years, and which has netted me a weekly income of over $200; I have no other source for a livelihood and consequently appeal to the business world for an opportunity to grow up in a new endeavor. WHY NOT MEET ME AND TALK IT OVER?

A genuinely touching ad, sensible and obviously quite sincere, in which you hear the appealing voice of a fellow being in trouble, but an ad which I fear is rather futile, is one like this:

AM 48 years old; defective hearing prevents continuation of salesman's career; I want situation where this impairment does not prevent satisfactory discharge of required duties.

A great, and a grave, lesson may be learned from the "Situations Wanted" page. And that is to be found mainly in the section where the first word of each advertisement is simply "MAN." Men there are in it of every age. I mean in considering the plight of the world one should ponder that great army whose business is "anything."

CHAPTER XIV

LITERARY LIVES

"MY God!" exclaimed the old lady in the railway carriage to Mr. Le Gallienne, "Tennyson is dead!"

Have not many of us as we have turned the daily papers these last several years frequently experienced the sensations of this dear old lady? Whistler, Swinburne, Meredith, Henry James, Howells. They are dead. Walt Whitman (wasn't it?), when he heard that Carlyle was dead, went out, and looked up at the stars, and said he didn't believe it.

We have been stirred to these emotional reflections by chancing to come early this afternoon in the Main Reading Room of the New York Public Library upon what would commonly be called a well-known book of reference. We had no intention of doing more than peer into it. Night found us there—the book still open before us.

LITERARY LIVES

The excellent Solomon Eagle (otherwise known as J. C. Squire), in one of his delightfully gossipy, though erudite, papers contributed to *The New Statesman* of London (collected, many of them, into a volume, bearing the title "Books in General"), remarks of works of reference that they "are extremely useful; but they resemble Virgil's Hell in that they are easy things to get into and very difficult to escape from." He continues:

> Take the Encyclopædia. I imagine that my experience with it is universal. I have only to dip my toe into this tempting morass and down I am sucked, limbs, trunk and all, to remain embedded until sleep or a visitor comes to haul me out. A man will read things in the Encyclopædia that he would never dream of looking at elsewhere—things in which normally he does not take the faintest interest. . . .
>
> "Who's Who" takes me in the same way. Ordinarily I have no particular thirst for it. I should not dream of carrying it about in my waistcoat pocket for perusal on the Underground Railway. But once I have allowed myself to open it, I am a slave to it for hours. This has just happened to me with the new volume, upon which I have wasted a valuable afternoon. I began by looking up a man's address; I then read the compressed life-story of the gentleman next above him (a major-general), wondering, somewhat idly, whether they read of each other's performances and whether either of them resented the possession by the other of a similar, and unusual, surname. Then I was in the thick of it.

Even so. But an afternoon spent in reading, straight along, the work of reference we have in

mind could not be called wasted. Indeed, quite the contrary; such an afternoon could be nothing less than one of those spiritual experiences which suddenly give a measure of growth to the soul.

The work which we came upon, in the circumstances indicated, was "The Dictionary of National Biography"; and the volumes which, by chance, we took down were Volumes II. and III. of the Second Supplement of the Dictionary. They contain, these volumes, memoirs of 1,135 noteworthy English persons dying between January 22, 1901, and December 31, 1911. The alphabet extends from John Faed, artist, to George, Lord Young, Scottish Judge. The contributors number 357; the list of these names is a roll of the most distinguished, in all departments, in the English Nation of our day. This publication, we should say, is the most interesting to English-speaking people, as in all probability it is the most important, generally, issued within at any rate the year of its publication. And though we cannot rid ourselves of a melancholy feeling in contemplating this survey of the great stream of brilliant life ended, we feel there is more good reading for the money in these pages

than in any other book one is likely to come across at random.

The toll these ten years have taken! The chronicle is here of some born to greatness, like Queen Victoria; of those, like Cecil Rhodes, who have achieved it. And the stories are told of some whom the world's fame found but within the last hour, then dead: John Millington Synge (contributed by John Masefield), and Francis Thompson (by Everard Meynell).

The proportion of biographies of men of letters predominates in considerable measure. Science follows in the list, then art. The least but one, sport, is the law. Among the names of women, forty-six in number, are Florence Nightingale, Kate Greenaway, Charlotte Mary Yonge, and Mrs. Craigie (John Oliver Hobbes).

Three illustrious lives entered the twentieth century in England as full of years as of honors. Meredith, Whistler, and Swinburne were born in the Spring of the nineteenth century, in 1828, 1834, and 1837 respectively, and the bloom of their days was with the giants, now legends, of the Victorian reign. The Kings in the history of art and letters have been—have they not?—gallant men. We suspect that it takes a gallant man

to be a King in these callings. Of these three—two wished to be soldiers—the most gallant spirit was the great-grandson of a rather grand tailor.

He won what men can and he bore what men must, is some ancient line.

The most extensive article in these volumes is the "Meredith," by Thomas Seccombe. It is the richest. Twelve pages is its compass. As a biography we are disposed to rank it with—let's see?—Froude's "Carlyle" (4 vols. 8vo.). Perhaps, on the whole, it is better. To go into any detail in our notice of the appearance of these books, and maintain any perspective, would carry us to a vast length. The bibiographer is deeply impressed with the character of Meredith, as a man, throughout his life, of noble aspect. His critical verdict reduced to one word is: "Thoroughly tonic in quality, his writings are [as Lamb said of Shakespeare] essentially manly." This is one of the pictures which most brightly sticks in our head:

> On the terrace in front of the chalet, whence he descended to meals, he was often to be heard carrying on dialogues with his characters, and singing with unrestrained voice. Whimsical and sometimes Rabelaisian fabrications accompanied the process of quickening the blood by a spin [a favorite word with him] over Surrey hills. Then he

wrote his master works, . . . and welcomed his friends, often reading aloud to them in magnificent recitative, unpublished prose or verse.

If there is anything upon which an article could be "based" not included in Mr. Seccombe's list of sources, it's a queer thing.

The "Swinburne" is furnished by Edmund Gosse, whose adequate equipment for the task includes "personal recollections extending over more than forty years." Passages of his portrait of the radiant poet are the most colorful in these volumes of the Dictionary. By way of critical discussion the writer says: "It is a very remarkable circumstance, which must be omitted in no outline of his intellectual life, that his opinions, on politics, on literature, on art, on life itself, were formed in boyhood, and that though he expanded he scarcely advanced in any single direction after he was twenty. If growth had continued as it began, he must have been the prodigy of the world. Even his art was at its height when he was five and twenty." The Whistler article is by Sir Walter Armstrong (who writes also on Holman Hunt) and is, one feels, the most judicial summary that has appeared on the most controversial subject, one can readily

recall, of the epoch closed. A very clear statement of a principle of the art of painting is this: "For years his work bore much the same relation to Japanese art as all fine painting does to nature. He took from Japanese ideals the beauties he admired, and re-created them as expressions of his own personality."

There is one delightful anecdote, in E. V. Lucas's sketch of Phil May. His *Punch* editor, Sir Francis Burnand, tells a story to the effect that on being asked at a club for a loan of fifty pounds, May produced all he had—half that amount—and then abstained from the club for some time for fear of meeting the borrower, because he felt that "he still owed him twenty-five pounds."

Sensible persons will read with satisfaction the just article by T. F. Henderson on that fine figure Henley, "one of the main supports," said Meredith, "of good literature in our time." Many good folks will like to look up Leslie Stephen, the first editor of this Dictionary, "who enjoyed the affectionate admiration of his most enlightened contemporaries." The article is by the present editor, Sir Sidney Lee. Æsthetically minded persons may read about William

Sharpe. Among the painters are Watts (biographer, Sir Sidney Colvin) and Orchardson. The "Seymour Haden" is furnished by A. M. Hind. Memoirs of Sir Henry Irving, Sir Theodore Martin, and Herbert Spencer come in this supplement. And so on. A piece of American history is related here, too, in the account of Edward Lawrence Godkin, founder of *The Nation.*

A subject of emotional literary controversy at the present moment is treated by Thomas Seccombe in his article on George Gissing. The general qualities of the Dictionary may be clearly observed in this notice. When the first volume of this second supplement—A to Evans—was issued not long ago rumors reached us of some agitation occasioned in England by the unepitaphical character of the memoirs of Edward VII. Well, discrimination was not made against a King. The frankness of this high tribunal in its calm recital of facts is striking.

After some steady reading of the great Dictionary we wonder if printed forms had been sent to the contributors, upon which they composed, in answer to the questions there, their articles: the order of progress of all the memoirs

is, in effect, so uniform. Each says at (it appeared) about the same point: His appearance was this. Each seems to conclude with a list of the portraits.

And this idea recalled to us a story. A foreigner entering our country's gates, upon being asked to fill out papers setting forth his nationality, age, color, and so on, wrote beside the query, "Business?"—"Rotten." In this intelligent interpretation of the question, the "business" of many whose lives are recorded in honor here was "rotten" for many a long year.

The story of literature has not ceased to be a sorry story; still, as was said on a time, comparable to the annals of Newgate. A tale it continues, in a large measure, of outcast experience, of destitution, "seeking a few pence by selling matches or newspapers," or development through suffering, of hospital sojourns, of contemplated suicide, of unfortunate "amorous propensities," of "ill-considered" marriage, of that immemorial "besetting weakness," of "a curious inability to do the sane, secure thing in the ordinary affairs of life," of "ordering his life with extreme carelessness in financial matters," of the weariness of reward for work of high character long

deferred, of charitable legacies "from a great-aunt."

Mr. Wells speaks somewhere of the amazing persistency of the instinct for self-expression. Where it exists, one reflects in musing on these biographies, you can't kill it with a club.

Very imposing we felt the literary style of this Dictionary to be. It treats of a man much as if he were a word, say, in the Century Dictionary. This is the sort of biographical writing, we said, that a man with whiskers can read. It does sound something like a court calendar. Its tone is omniscient, indeed. But the Recording Angel here does not drop a tear upon the oath of any Uncle Toby and blot it out forever. No. He says, of one we tremble to name, "his language was often beyond the reach of apology." Fine is the dignity with which sordid things are related. "The return journey he was under the necessity of performing on foot." Almost grotesque is the neglect of the caressing touch of sentiment. "His own wish was to be a jockey." The treatment of the theme of love is entertaining. "At the age of nineteen he married."

August is the passivity in the presence of the Reaper who mows the golden grain. Without

poetry, oh, Death, where is thy sting! In these volumes, of none is it sighed: At twilight his spirit fled. Had he but lived . . . ! It is: He died December 14, 1908. He left no issue. A fair portrait of him by Charles Ricketts is in the possession of Mr. Edmund Gosse.

We arose after several hours' reading with a sense of having perused for a space two recent volumes of the Book of Judgment. We were full of emotion. We felt the mystery of the destiny of man. How admirable he is and how pitiful! Throbbing, we went forth into the throbbing city.

CHAPTER XV

SO VERY THEATRICAL

THERE is a young woman I thought of taking there for luncheon the other day, but when I called for her it did not seem to me that she had used her lip-stick that morning—and so we went somewhere else.

She is pretty good-looking and was dressed not at all unfashionably. She would have done all right at the Waldorf, or at the Vanderbilt, or Biltmore, or Ritz-Carlton, or Ambassador. Indeed, I don't know but that at some such place as that I should have been rather proud of her.

But, you see, for the place I had in mind her skirt was a little too long—it came almost halfway to her ankles. Her bosom was quite covered. She moves with fair grace, but without striking sinuousness. And I suddenly recollected that she does not smoke much.

No; I saved myself just in time; I should have been chagrined, embarrassed, most decid-

edly uncomfortable; she would have been conspicuous. I should probably have lost caste with the waiters, too; and not again have been able to get a table after the plush rope had been thrown across the entrance to the dining-room; which, so keen is competition for places there, is shortly before one o'clock.

If you know where this place is, why, of course, all right. But nobody has any business to go shouting all over the housetops exactly where it is. People who aren't just naturally by temperament a part of the picture oughtn't to know how to find it. Though it is a perfectly good bet that bunches of them would like to know.

But that's just the way so many of these havens of the elect get ruined. A lot of curious "visitors" go piling in right along; the scene soon loses all its authenticity; and shortly becomes bogus altogether. Why, I can remember when artists—painters and writers—lived in Greenwich Village. There, in those days . . . But all that was years ago.

This much only will I tell you about the location of the most *distingué* place there is in which to have luncheon. The centre of the inhabited world is, of course, Longacre Square, that

widened curving stretch of Broadway looking north several blocks from the narrow stern of the gracefully towering Times Building, rising from its site of a bit of an island surrounded by four surging currents of traffic. A few miles away (from Longacre Square) the provinces begin. But there, the most gleaming spot on this our globe under the canopy of the purple night, is the quintessence, the apex of human life. . . . I am here speaking, of course, in the spirit of those of that nomad race whose hopes for gold and fame lie through the "stage entrance"—I mean the ladies and gentlemen of the theatre.

To the east just off Longacre Square along the crosstown streets is a medley of offices of divers theatrical and screen journals, chop-houses, and innumerable band-box hotels whose names doubtless only a district messenger boy could recite in any number. The particular one for which we are headed is famous enough to those familiar with fame of this character. Here the "Uncle Jack" of the American stage, Mr. Drew, for some time made his residence. It is always the stopping place in New York of perhaps the finest of our novelists, Joseph Hergesheimer. That mystical Indian gentleman, Mr.

Rabindranath Tagore, has found it a not unworthy tent on his western pilgrimages. And so on.

You cannot be long in its rich little lobby without overhearing struck the high note of its distinctive clientele. "Where do you open?" asks someone of someone else. And the answer is not unlikely to be: "At Stamford. When do you close?" In the subdued light bare satin arms and enspiriting lengths of colorful stocking flash from the deep chairs where feminine forms are waiting. A graceful hand opens a telephone booth to expel a smoking cigarette.

Here enters Walter Prichard Eaton, come down from his Berkshire farm for the height of the theatrical season. A tall, leisurely, very New Englandish, smooth-shaven young man, now coming decidedly grey just over the ears. Entering the dining-room we come plump against our old friend Meredith Nicholson lunching with a bevy of friends. A youthful fifty perhaps now, the author of one of the best sellers of any day, "The House of a Thousand Candles." Clean-shaven, with a physiognomy suggesting that of a Roman senator. What has brought him just now from Indiana? Well, he is revolving in his mind the idea of writing a new play, as

soon, he adds, as he "can find the right ink." Hasn't been able to get hold of any that just suited him.

But much more important to his mind, apparently, than this play is another mission in which he has become involved. He is going to have himself "mapped," that is, have his horoscope cast. Yes, by one of the ladies of his party, who, it appears, is eminent as a professor of this science, now rapidly coming into a period of great vogue. When he has supplied her with the data concerning his birth she will reveal to him the course of his career through 1922.

On a number of the tables are cards marked "Reserved." Around two sides of the room upholstered seats running the length of the wall seat couples in greater intimacy of tête-à-tête side by side before their little tables. Most of the young women present—but could you really call many of them young women? . . . Their most striking feature, after the dizziness of their beauty, and the ravishing audacity of their clothes, is the bewitching tenderness of their years. More than several of these dainty, artfully rose-cheeked smokers look to be hardly past seventeen. Their foppishly dressed male com-

panions frequently are in effect far from anything like such youth; and in a number of cases are much more likely to remind you of Bacchus than of Apollo.

Two of these misses nearby are discussing with one another their "doorman." "Isn't he," exclaims one, "the very dearest old doorman you have ever seen in all of your whole life!" Yes, it would seem that, peering down the long vista of the past, from out of their experience of hundreds of theatres, neither of these buds of womanhood could recall any doorman so "dear" as their present one.

The dominant group in the room is a gay and populous party about a large round table in the centre. And undoubtedly the dominant figure of this party is, you recognize, Alexander Woollcott, dramatic critic of the New York *Times,* invariably at this same table at this same hour, a very spirited, a very round plump young man, very dapper to the end of every hair in his trim little black moustache. Next to him who is that? Why, goodness me! if it isn't Edna Ferber, who, though I doubt not she would not want to be counted in the fledgling class of some of our sou-

brette friends here, indeed does seem to be getting younger all the while.

Joining this party now is an odd and rather humorous looking figure, tall, amusingly stooping and amusingly ample of girth for a character of such apparently early manhood, an intensely black crop of hair and a very blackish streak of moustache, soft collar, unpressed clothes. Sits down, hooping himself over his plate with a suggestion of considerable shyness. Gives you an impression, perhaps by the brightness of his eyes, of Puckish mirth playing within his mind. Heywood Broun.

At the table on our right we perceive a very popular lady known to us, Miss Margaret Widdemer, or, as she now is, Mrs. Robert Haven Schauffler. Her general air breathing the simplicity of a milkmaid amid this scene. Under her mammoth floppy hat reminding you of an early summer rose. She is discussing with a spectacled person who looks as if he might have something to do with book publishing whether her next book should be a light romance on the order of her "Wishing-Ring Man" and "Rose Garden Husband" or she should come into the

new movement of serious "Main Street" kind of realism.

And there, on our left, certainly is a publisher, Mr. Liveright of the firm of Boni and Liveright. Young fellow, thirty-five perhaps. Maybe he is talking about some of his striking successes, such as "Potterism" and "From Mayfair to Moscow." With him Ludwig Lewisohn, literary and dramatic critic.

Back of us we detect young Burton Rascoe, former literary editor of the Chicago *Tribune,* newly arrived in New York as managing editor of *McCall's Magazine,* and to whom (by the way) the suppressed novel "Jurgen" was dedicated. You wouldn't think anybody would be so frowning as to want to suppress Mr. Rascoe. He looks as if he might be twin brother to any dewy bud here.

Who is that he is with? Theodore Maynard, I declare. Young English poet, critic and novelist. And the other side of him is a gentleman, Oliver Saylor by name, who at the height of the revolution went to Russia to study the Russian drama, and engrossed in æsthetics lived for a time in quarters midway between the contending military forces. Beyond we see a young lady

recently come on from Ted Shawn's song and dance studio in Los Angeles.

And yonder you see a young man who is just as dear and sweet as he can be. He served his country during the war by knitting a sweater and a "helmet" for a poet he knew in the army in France. He, this dainty youth, looks pretty much lip-sticked himself. In order not to sin against daintiness this young person has a habit of powdering his nose. A coarse friend of his forbade his doing this, and the next time he met him neatly powdered rebuked him for it. Whereupon the young man replied: "Oh! You wouldn't (would you?) let a little powder come between friends."

And, finally, here most happily we are ourselves.

CHAPTER XVI

OUR STEEPLEJACK OF THE SEVEN ARTS

THERE is a rather frisky looking apartment house there now, a pastry shop and tea room occupying the ground floor—behind it, the other side of a venerable brick wall, a tiny, ancient burying ground. But in days of yesteryear here stood a tavern of renown, the Old Grape Vine, which on this site, Sixth Avenue at Eleventh Street, had given cheer since Sixth Avenue was little more than a country road. A sagging, soiled white, two-story frame structure, with great iron grill lamps before the door. Within, the main room was somewhat reminiscent of London's Olde Cheshire Cheese.

The proprietor was a canny Scot, one MacClellan. ("Old Mac"! Whither has he gone?) I was coming along by there the other day, and I asked a man with whom I chanced to walk if he remembered the Old Grape Vine. "Ah! yes;" he said; "they had mutton pies there." They

did. And excellent ale, also, served in battered pewter mugs. "They" had here, too (some fifteen years ago), excellent society beneath the dingy light. Roaring, roistering George Luks (as he was then) very much to the fore. At the rickety mahogany table where Frans-Halsian George held forth frequently was to be found the painter William J. Glackens and his brother "Lew," humorous draughtsman for *Puck.* Ernest Lawson sometimes came in. A Mr. Zinzig, a very pleasant soul and an excellent pianist and teacher of the piano, often was of the company. A Mr. FitzGerald, art critic in those days of the *Sun,* sometimes "sat in." And a delightful old cock, Mr. Stephenson, art critic then of the *Evening Post.* Among the most devoted habitués of the place was an old-school United States army officer turned writer of military stories. (When the proceedings had progressed to a certain stage of mellowness it was his habit to go home and return directly arrayed in his uniform.) There was, too, a queer figure of a derelict journalist associated with *Town Topics.* There was an inoffensive gentleman of leisure whose distinction was that he was brother to a famous Shakespearean scholar. (As the

hour grew late he would begin to whistle softly to himself through his teeth.) There was a rotund being of much reading who perpetually smoked a very old pipe and who was editor of a tobacco journal. There was a man of the sea who continually told stories of Japan. (After eleven he was somewhat given to singing.) There was an illustrator for a tu'penny magazine, who (so as to seem to be a large staff) signed a variety of names to his work. From the land of R. L. S., he. One time while in a doze (somewhere else) he was robbed. His comment upon his misfortune became a classic line. It was: "By heaven! As long as whiskey is sold to lose ten dollars is enough to drive a Scot mad!" (This was long before anybody had ever heard of the now illustrious Mr. Volstead.) And many more there were. Ah, me! ah, me! How the picture has changed!

Well, the point of all this (if it have any point) is that it was in the Old Grape Vine (of tender memory) that I first saw James Gibbons Huneker. I think that, in his promenades as an impressionist, he was there but seldom. Though we know that high among the Seven Arts he rated the fine art of drinking Pilsner. The old places

of Martin's and Lüchow's (headquarters on a time for the musical cognoscenti) were ports of call on his rounds; and he moved freely, I believe, among the places of refreshment along the foreign quarter of lower Fourth Avenue. At the Grape Vine, I understand, he was an especial friend of Luks, and probably of Glackens and Lawson. And, though he was a very famous man, he seemed to like the motley company.

Ten or twelve years ago I was earning a living more honestly than perhaps I have been making one since. I was a clerk in a book store—the retail department, it happened, of the house which publishes Mr. Huneker's books. And there, from my position "on the floor," I frequently saw him moving in and out. Moving rather slowly, with the dignity of bulk. A distinguished figure, quietly but quite neatly dressed, very erect in carriage, head held well back, supporting his portliness with that physical pride of portly men, a physiognomy of Rodinesque modelling—his cane a trim touch to the ensemble. He was, I distinctly remember, held decidedly in regard by the retail staff because he was (what, by a long shot, a good many

"authors" were not) exceedingly affable in manner to us clerks.

The moment I have particularly in mind was when Samuel Butler's volume "The Way of All Flesh" first appeared in an American edition. We all know all about Butler now. But, looking back, it certainly is astonishing how innocent most all of us then were of any knowledge of the great author of "Erewhon." Even so searching a student of literature as W. C. Brownell was practically unacquainted with Butler. He was taking home a copy of "The Way of All Flesh" to read. Mr. Huneker was standing by. In some comment on the book he remarked that Butler had been a painter. "A painter!" exclaimed Mr. Brownell, in a manner as though wondering how it came about he knew so little of the man. "But this," said Mr. Huneker, referring to the novel, "is not his best stuff. That is in his note-books." Brownell: "And where are they?" Huneker: "In the British Museum." Mr. Brownell made a fluttering gesture (as though to express that he "gave up") toward Mr. Huneker: "He knows everything!" he ejaculated.

We should, of course, be surprised now that

anybody *did not* know that Butler had been a painter. When, just a short time ago, W. Somerset Maugham adapted for the purposes of his sensational novel "The Moon and Sixpence" the character and career of Paul Gauguin, it was in the pages of Huneker that many first looked for, and found, intelligence concerning the master of the Pont Aven school of painting. Well, Gauguin is now an old story. And Ibsen, Tolstoy, Wagner, Richard Strauss, Rimbaud, De Gourmont, Nietzsche, Meredith, Henry James, William James, Bergson, Barrès, Anatole France, Flaubert, Lemaître, Huysmans, Maeterlinck, Bandelaire, Stirner, Strindberg, Faguet, Shaw, Wilde, George Moore, Yeats, Synge, Schnitzler, Wederkind, Lafargue, Rodin, Cézane, Matisse, Picasso, Van Gogh, George Luks, that wondrous "flock of Unicorns"—they all are old stories, too . . . now. But it was our Steeplejack, James Huneker, who was our pioneer watcher of the skies. And what in the large sweep of his vision of the whole field of the world's beauty he saw, he reported with infinite gusto. "Gusto," as H. L. Mencken in the Huneker article of his

"Book of Prefaces" says, "unquenchable, contagious, inflammatory."

The extent of the personal contact which Mr. Huneker enjoyed and maintained with the first-rate literary men of the world was amazing. While I was with the book shop I speak of, "presentation copies" of each new book of his, to be sent out "with the compliments of the author," were piled up for forwarding literally several feet high. They went to all the great in letters, in every country, that you could think of. Anatole France, Joseph Conrad, Henry James, George Brandes, Edmund Gosse, George Moore—people like that.

Vast was the incoming stream of books to him, presentation copies, review copies, "publicity" copies; so great a flood that it was necessary for him periodically to call in an old book man to clear his shelves by carting away a wagon-load or two of—genuine treasure. A catalogue I one time saw of such volumes "from the library of James Huneker" was sufficient in riches to have been the catalogue of the entire stock of a very fair shop dealing in "association" volumes, first editions, and so forth. And a survey of the books themselves made it quite apparent that a reader

who has read every word that Huneker ever printed (and that would be a person who had read a good deal) may yet (very likely) be a reader who has not read some of the best of Huneker. I refer to "Jimmie's" humorous, pungent marginalia.

Mr. Huneker's close friends have taken occasion since his death to speak warmly of his kindness toward obscure, struggling talent. There was a side to him, akin to this, which I have not seen commented upon. Huneker's fame as a critic had been for years accepted throughout Europe. When his "New Cosmopolis" was published (a book I did not myself think so highly of) Joyce Kilmer, then newly come to journalism, reviewed it for the New York *Times,* very eulogistically. Mr. Huneker went to the trouble of looking up Kilmer to thank him very simply for his praise.

Mr. Huneker was a loyal and disinterested servant of good literature wherever he found it, and his happily was the power to be an ambassador to success. So short a time as about four years ago very few people had heard of William McFee. "Aliens," his first book, had met with no appreciable success. The manuscript

of "Casuals of the Sea" (or the English "sheets" of the book, I do not recall which) came into the hands of a publishing house at Garden City. A member of the editorial staff of this house at this time was Christopher Morley. And I happened at the moment to have a job as sort of handy man at editorial chores around the premises. Morley immediately became a great "fan" for the book. Undoubtedly a fine book, and it was accepted, but (there was a question) could it be "put across"? It was very long, not of obviously popular character, and the author's name commanded no attention at all.

The first "advance" copy of the book sent out went (at Morley's direction) to Mr. Huneker. He was then writing regularly critical articles for something like a half dozen publications. "Casuals of the Sea" (such things did not turn up every day) was a "find" for his enthusiasm. He "pulled" two columns of brilliant Hunekerean firecrackers about it in the New York *Sun;* wrote another article of length on the book for the New York *Times;* gave the volume a couple of paragraphs of mention in his department on the Seven Arts at that time running in *Puck,*

and perhaps mentioned the book elsewhere also. With the weight of such fervor and authority "Casuals" was most auspiciously launched. It could not now, by any chance, be passed by.

I do not, of course, mean to imply that there was anything artificial or "manufactured" about the "vogue" of "Casuals." First, Mr. Huneker was not a reviewer but a critic, if not thoroughly a great one, certainly a very real one; and about the last man going who could be got to "push" anything he did not whole-heartedly believe was fine. And secondly, "Casuals" had "the goods."

Through my connection with the matter of "Casuals" I suppose it was that a correspondence came about between Mr. Huneker and me. And in all my days I have never seen so energetic a correspondent. It seems to me that I got a letter from him about every other morning. I dropped out of the publishing business and went to Indiana for a time. I let him know when I got there, my motive in this being mainly to notify him that I *was* out of the publishing business and so was no longer in a position to give any business attention to letters relating to books. But letters from him continued to reach me with the same regularity. While, I hardly

need say, I enjoyed this correspondence enormously, I was decidedly embarrassed by it, as I could not but keenly feel that I was taking up his time to no purpose. Still, of course, I felt that I should answer each letter of his without an impolite delay, and no sooner did he get my reply than he answered back again. Gradually, however, we got the thing slowed down.

His letters were prodigal of witty things. I am afraid I have not kept them; if so I do not know where they are—I move about a good deal. One neat play of words I remember. I do not know whether or not he himself ever used it elsewhere. I did use it in a book, giving due credit to Mr. Huneker. I had told him that I was going in for writing on my own. His comment was: "He that lives by the pen shall perish by the pen." Some of his letters, I recall, were signed, "Jim, the Penman."

And it was no simple trick to read them. He used a pale ink. The handwriting was small, curious, and to me almost illegible. Why compositors did not mob him I do not know. He wrote everything by hand; never would learn to use a typewriter, and declared that he could not acquire the faculty of dictation.

This leads me to the story of one of the articles he contributed to *The Bookman.* When, upon my return to New York, I became (for a time) editor of this magazine I pursued him for contributions. Yes, later on he would send us something, but always it was later on, later on. I had about given up hope of ever getting anything from him when a bulky wad of closely-written "copy" on yellow paper arrived. Expecting that it would take me a couple of days to decipher the manuscript, I joyously acknowledged receipt of it at once, without a thought of questioning the nature of the article. When I tried to read the article, after I had held the first page sidewise, next upside down, then examined it in a mirror, I "passed the buck" and sent the copy straight on to the printers. If printers had read him before printers ought to be able to do so again. I advertised the article to appear in the next number of the magazine. When I got the article back in galley proofs—I got a jolt. It wasn't *"Bookman* stuff" at all, all about a couple of "old rounders," as Mr. Huneker called them, taking a stroll.

I do not think that Mr. Huneker has as yet since his death, to the time these rambling re-

marks are being written, received anything like adequate recognition in the press. The "obituary" articles in the newspapers have carried the air that he was hardly more than an excellent "newspaper man"—somewhat older, but something like (dare I say?) Heywood Broun or Alexander Woollcott. Ah! no; James Huneker was a critic and an artist, and a figure, too, in our national life. Though he was all his days until almost his last breath a hard-working journalist with an immediate "copy date" before him. And though he most naturally thought of himself, with common-sense pride in his calling, as a journalist. I remember his one time speaking of Arnold Bennett as "a hard-working journalist as well as a novel writer." Indicating his great esteem for the character of journalist. And he used to speak, too, with fraternal pride and affection in inflection, of young men who had written good books, as being among "our men," meaning associated with the same paper as himself.

At the remarkable funeral service held in the new Town Hall in New York high and touching honor was done his memory by the stage and the musical profession, but literature seemed to

be officially represented by the person of Richard Le Gallienne alone, and painting and sculpture not at all. The articles by Mr. Huneker's colleagues among music critics have seemed very largely to claim him as quite their own. True, no doubt, his most penetrating writing was done in the field of musical criticism. But, also, Huneker was an evangel who belongs to the Seven Arts.

One thing should be added. It is a sad thing, but it is of the nature of life. A good editorial in *The New Republic* began: "James Huneker named one of his best books 'The Pathos of Distance.' In a single day his own figure is invested with the memorial gentleness there described." No, not altogether in a single day. He had already begun, and more than begun, to recede into the pathos of distance. His *flair* was for the championship and interpretation of the "new" men. And, for the most part, his new men had become old men. His stoutest admirer must admit that Mr. Huneker's work was "dated."

But where (and this is sadder still) is his like today?

CHAPTER XVII

FORMER TENANT OF HIS ROOM

THERE are certain things which must be done, to yield their best, when one is young. For one thing, there is only one time in life to run away to sea. If you did not run away to sea when you were a lad, it is too late now for you to get any sport out of it. 'Tis something the same with living in a garret or in a hall bedroom. If you did not read "Robinson Crusoe" when you were a boy there is no use for you to read it now; you will not understand it. There are some other things you can enjoy when you are old—grandchildren, for instance. But the time to come up to a great city is when one is young. The time to walk up Broadway at night, and feel a gusto about it, and Fifth Avenue by day, is when one is young. That is an enchanted time, when it is a fine dashing thing to be doing, to live at a second-rate boarding house; when discouragement is adventure; when it is worth while even

to be poor; when one makes life-long friends at sight; when young love is sipped; when courage is ever stout in one's breast; when one's illusions are virgin yet; and all's right with the world. At that season one can swell with a rich personal pride in "Shanley's" and, almost at the same time, eat one's own theatre supper in a "Dairy Lunch" room, where every customer is his own waiter as well, and where his table is the broadened arm of his chair against the wall.

Richard Day, student at the law, munched his egg sandwich (egg sandwich was the favorite dish at the "Dairy Lunches" until eggs got so high) and drank his coffee from a cup that remarkably resembled in shape a shaving mug and was decorated in similar fashion. The blocks of sugar (two for Richard) for this stimulating beverage (made out of chicory) were taken by the customer with his fingers from a heaping-full sort of great punch-bowl mounted on a pedestal in the middle of the room. It was drawn from a nickel-plated engine with glass tubes by a young man in a white coat like a barber's, who served it, with crullers, piece of pie, or sandwich, across a kind of little bar at the rear end of the long room.

Day scorned the packed, parading trolley cars, and swung vigorously up the street. Far up the thoroughfare an enormous electric sign (in its size suggesting that it had been somehow brought back by Gulliver from the country of Brobdingnag and mounted here upon a sturdy little building for awful exhibition) its gigantic illuminated letters spelling "Arthur Pendennis Ten Cent Cigar," lighted the mist for blocks approaching it, and marked the north boundary of the dominion for revelry. The sidewalks were much quieter now. One of those birds of the urban night deftly wheeled his vehicle alongside our pedestrian and pulled his clattering quadruped violently back upon its haunches until it slid along the slippery pavement. "Cab, sir? Cab?" Then he whisked away again. It was not long before Richard had entered into the district of slumbering residences, and not much longer until he ran up the steps before his own door, or, speaking more literally, his own landlady's door. It is not much to mount three pairs of stairs in the brave days when one is twenty-one, and Day was in the little room, where, rich only in the glory of his rising sun, in his youth, he weathered it so long.

FORMER TENANT OF HIS ROOM

This apartment was the width of the dark hall, which was face to face with it, about fourteen feet long, and furnished in tune, so to speak. An uncommonly small, old-fashioned, wooden bedstead, a bantam-size "dresser," a washstand its shorter brother, a small table or "stand," and two half-grown chairs, mature before their season, were the principal articles of furniture. The room was heated by an oil stove that had passed the age of vanity in one's appearance; it was lighted at night by a gas-jet, without a globe; by day through a single window, which occupied between a half and a third of the wall space of the front end of the room, and which balanced in decorative effect with the door at the other end. A row of books was arranged along the dresser top against the lower part of the small looking-glass. Two pictures (the property of Day), one of Lincoln and one of Roosevelt squinting in the sunlight (this is a land where every young man may hope to be President), were tacked on the walls. In company with these were a combination calendar and fire-insurance advertisement and a card displaying a lithographed upper part and idealistic legs of a blithe young woman wearing, stuck on, a short, bright skirt made of

sandpaper and streaked with match-scratches, who in fancy letters was ingeniously labelled "A Striking Girl." These bits of applied art were properties of Mrs. Knoll's establishment.

Day's dresser had several small drawers and a little square door. He had one day discovered adhering to the back of this door a hardened piece of chewing gum, and from this he had deduced that a former tenant of the room had been a woman, presumably a young one (for surely there is an age after which one knows better). He sometimes speculated on the subject of the former tenant, and he was of three minds about her vocation. Sometimes he thought she had been a school-teacher, sometimes he thought an art student, and again a clerk in a store. He reconstructed her as having had red hair and having been a bit frowsy. But whatever she had been she had slept on a mighty hard little bed, and he felt something like a tenderness for her on that account.

When he had got home from the theatre, Richard sat on the edge of his bed (it seemed always somehow the most natural place in the room to sit), and smoked his pipe. One Christmas Day he and his bosom friend had gone together and

bought pipes exactly alike, then each had given his to the other. Years later Day was compelled to give up smoking, and he was never exactly the same again. But when he was young the gods blessed him. He smoked his pipe out, then he slowly pulled off his shoes. That is, he pulled off one shoe and sat abstractedly a considerable while with it in his hand. He had many thoughts, mainly associated with an unknown young lady he had seen that evening at the theatre. He wished he had had on a different style of collar —and he would have had if his laundryman had kept his word. However, he thought rather sadly what booted it to him now. Then he roused himself, slowly undressed, put on his pajamas (his mother had made them for him), turned off his light, pulled up his window curtain (so the morning light would waken him), and got into bed.

Richard fell into a great many adventures in his night's sleep. He fought bandits, with never any cartridges in his gun; he travelled across plains that appeared to be constructed on the principle of a treadmill; he visited sundry peculiar places and did divers queer things with solemnity and without surprise. After a while it

seemed to him that he was somewhere talking with, or rather to, the former tenant of his room. But the former tenant did not have red hair; her hair was the loveliest brown; nor was she the least bit frowzy; she was the very opposite extreme to that. Nor clerk nor teacher nor student was she. She was a bright princess. Her complexion had rather more of the rose than of the lily. Her pure and eloquent blood spoke in her cheeks. She and the lady he had seen at the theatre were one and the same person. He could not make out exactly how he came to know she was the former tenant, but that seemed to be considered so very well understood he felt ashamed to speak about it.

He was saying to her some of the cleverest things he had ever heard. He surprised himself as he listened to himself; and he was much elated; for if ever he wished to speak well, now was the time. Now Day was really a very clever fellow, as well as a comely one (this is only a story of his youth, but in after life he became a distinguished man), and, like all very clever fellows, he was never perfectly happy except when his talents were recognized and appreciated. Here

in his dream he had come into his own. It was a night to be marked with a white stone. One of the things that particularly impressed him in this dream was his impression that it was not a dream.

In the morning it was always colder in Day's room than at night, and always it seemed somehow lonesomer. It was bare then, and not cozy. To come directly from such an especially comfortable dream into the cold, grey dawn, and find one's window opaque with frost and one's breath like steam in the air, requires a little time for one to adjust oneself to the transition. Richard lay a little time generating courage to get up. He did not immediately shake off his dream entirely; but crumbs of it stuck to his mind, like the last of a fine cake on the face. But it was as if his cake had turned cold in the mouth. He squirmed in bed with embarrassment when he reviewed those clever things, on which he had so plumed himself, that he had said to the former tenant. They were so very poor and flat that he tried to stop his mind against the recollection of them. And even the former tenant herself, as she faded now more into the night, and he came more out into the morning, was like Cinderella

as she fled from the hall back to her kitchen. But Richard caught up the crystal slipper that remained to him and in his bosom bore it forth into the day.

CHAPTER XVIII

ONLY SHE WAS THERE

DIRECTLY in the intense emphasis of white light from an arc lamp overhead, and standing about midway in the long, dark, thickly-packed line of people waiting, was a young man decidedly above the middle stature, in a long outer coat. He was broad in the shoulders, formed in excellent proportion, apparently in about the first or second and twentieth year of his age. His forehead was intelligent, his nose exceptionally good, his mouth rather big and lips full, his chin round and with a cleft in the centre. His hair, chestnut, moderately cropped, discovered, what of it was visible below his hat, a decided inclination to curl. He was redolent of health and the unmined masculine vigor pertaining to his time of life. As the earliest ancestor of this kind of historical writing would have said, "He was one of the handsomest young fellows that hath ever been seen"; in short, he was not

unlike one Jones, Christian-named Tom. This young man was Richard Day, student of the law, and he had come from his silent "furnished room" to refresh himself, at a minimum cost, at the dramatic presentation of an immortal story of love.

On the occasions when the entertainment to be is of a superior order, the price of admission is doubled or trebled, and the patrons of the theatre gallery are of an exceptional character. They comprise school teachers in abundance, miscellaneous students, matinée girls driven high by the prohibitory prices below, young clerks, and a sprinkling from the usual ranks of the gallery-god, the better sort of them, however, the more wealthy and more aspiring. The original line containing Richard Day had assembled an hour or so before time, to be on the spot at the opening of the doors at a commendable production of "Romeo and Juliet."

There came a sudden jolting, like the coupling of railroad cars, then a denser packing of the line, a being pushed off one's balance and being pressed back into it again, and slowly, jerkily, the crowd began to move forward; then swept toward the entrance. The doors had been opened. As the throng began to move, a wom-

an's voice rose near Day ejaculating breathlessly, "Oh! Oh!" Simultaneously a shrill cry arose, "Oh, there's a sick lady here! a sick lady! Oh, please! Oh, please! Won't you make room for a sick lady!" Day with all his force made what room he could, conceiving that the thing desired was to get the stricken lady out in the open as quickly as possible. A little peaked woman in a light coat took instant advantage of the slight breach then opened, impetuously to advance herself in the line. When the momentary gap had closed again, piteously the crying was resumed, and it continued at intervals almost the entire distance to the box-office, though it was in a slightly different neighborhood and observably proceeded from exactly the point of vantage gained by the little peaked woman; who, it might be inferred, was a dual personality, comprising in the same lady both a sick lady and another who was her good Samaritan and assumed the care of her.

Nothing railed the crowd into a straight line on one side, though on the other a wall held them so. The impatient crowding forward from the rear convexed the outer edge of the line of people, much against the will of those persons who found

themselves being swept out of the direct way and felt the main current surging past them. What was yet more agitating to these was that ahead of them an iron railing did begin, at the foot of some steps, fencing in a narrow approach to the ticket office. If they should be swept past the mouth of this lane on the outside, their chance of admittance was hopeless. Day stemmed the swerving current himself by the strength of his body and by a kind of determined exercise of his will. But he felt directly behind him someone less strong losing hold with every step of advance; then suddenly this despairing someone, realizing herself pushed quite to one side, with a little scream, caught at his crooked arm; which he instantly, involuntarily clapped firmly against him, hooking on in this manner and towing safely and rapidly along someone frailer than himself. When they had come to the rail he saw that he would get in by so narrow a margin himself that, himself inside, he would then but tow her along outside, which of course would be a less than useless thing for her. So he backed water, so to speak, with all his might, bracing himself against the end of the rail, until he had got a little space before him, around into which he drew her whom

he thought robbed of her place by the frantic selfishness of the crowd.

But in doing this, it seemed he had inadvertently held back for a moment the little peaked woman, who was at his inside elbow. She, finding herself delayed for a brief period almost at the goal in her desperate bargain-counter sort of rush for the ticket-window, blew out into a spitting cat kind of impotent fury. "Ain't you got no semblance of decency! you great big brute!" she screamed in his ear. "Ain't you got no ideas of gentlemanliness at all! If I was a man I'd teach you some shame, tramplin' on a woman, a poor weak woman! a woman!" She fairly writhed with scorn at this depravity. Day attempted to humble himself to her, for her pacification; but another woman's getting in ahead of her at that instant drove her almost mad, and her frenzy interfering for the moment with her articulation she could only glare at him with an expression suggesting some kind of feline hydrophobia. When her breath returned more to her command she continued to revile him as they went along. Although Day had done nothing to merit shame, he squirmed inwardly with something not unlike that feeling, and he blessed the general commo-

tion which drowned a vixen's voice. He felt ashamed, too, to be where he was, though he had not thought of it that way before; he should not have brought himself into a crowd more than half of women.

His reflections became rather abstract and levelled themselves somewhat against the feminine temperament in general. He felt the littleness of it (so he saw it), the peevishness of it; its inability to take punishment good-naturedly; its incapacity for being a "good loser"; its lack of the philosophic character which accepts humorously discomforts and injustice, real as well as imagined; its lack of broadness of view; its selfish lack of the sense of fair play; its not-being-square-and-above-board way; its sneakiness, its deceitfulness; the contemptible devices that it will resort to, assuming them to be its natural weapons against a superior strength, both physical and of the understanding. He knew that in a crowd of men if anyone of them had had the despicable disposition of this woman his dread of the hearty, boisterous ridicule of his fellow brutes which would inevitably have followed his meanness would have forced him to stifle his temptation in silence. He knew that there is no place

where one may better learn to appreciate what may be called the good-natured easy-goingness of the male animal generally than in an uncomfortable crowd of men. He thanked heaven he was of the superior sex. When a young man thanks heaven that he is of the superior sex it may not be uninteresting to observe in what manner he conducts himself subsequently.

As fast as the crowd was served with tickets it ran up the multiplied flights of stairs, moved in single file past the ticket-chopper, then on to come out, high up, into the vast bowl of the theatre. Here from one's seat the impression of the weird, ship-at-sea like effect of the curves of the galleries, balconies, and tiers of boxes, sweeping back from the light in front, dropping away from the vaulted ceiling; the impression of being high up close under a great roof and far from the stage; the impression of the myriads of vague elusive faces in the half-lit, thick, scintillating atmosphere of the hot, crowded place; the impression of the playhouse scheme of decoration, red walls and tinsel in the dusk, cream color and tinsel bas-relief in the highly artificial yellow light, casting purplest shadows, and the heroic mural paintings in blue and yellow and green, the sense

of the infinite moving particles of the throng; the sense of its all facing one way, of the low hum of it, and of its respiration—all this is stuff that puts one in the mood for a play. The keen actualities fade and become the shadows; sense of one's own life and vanity and disappointment slips away; one is to enjoy a transmigration of soul for a brief time. "Now for the play!" thought Richard.

A man was climbing up the steps of the aisle, some distance away, flinging an inadequate number of fluttering programs into the crowd. None fell in Day's neighborhood, to the indignant consternation of all there. A chorus of exclamatory sighs went up from a feminine flock just settled at his right, all faces following the disappointing program distributor. A stocky young man at Day's left hand arose, and clambering out between the parallel two rows of seats, occupants getting on their feet to allow him passage, started after the disappearing man of programs.

A full-throated feminine voice burst almost in Day's right ear: "Oh, please tell him to get one for us!" Day lunged after the stocky young man, reaching for his coat-tails, and cried out, "Hey there! Hey! Fellow! Hold on!" until

it was quite hopeless to continue. The sea of people closed in between him and his quest; the stocky young man, his ears plugged with the multitude of voices, shook himself free from the narow, clogged passage, and was gone. Day turned to the owner of the feminine voice, "He will bring a lot, I think; if not I'll get you some," he said. And he caught an elusive impression of cheeks precisely the color of cheeks that had just been smartly slapped, suggesting the idea that if one should press one's finger against them one's finger would leave streaks there when taken away; and he caught an impression of eyes that were like deep, brimming pools reflecting lights; and an impression of a cloud of dusky brown-like hair which reminded him of a host of rich autumn leaves. She of these cheeks and eyes and this hair was, apparently, in a party with two companions, whose peering faces showed indistinctly beyond her. In one significance of the word, she might have been called a girl, or she was a young woman, a miss, a lass, a young lady, as you please; as were they her companions. Merry schoolgirl spirits lingered in them all, supplemented by the grace and dawning dignity of young womanhood. She was at that sweet nosegay period

when young ladies are just, as it is sometimes said, finishing their education. Her age was that enchanted time, holiest of the female seasons, which hangs between mature girlhood and full womanhood. Day felt a suspicion, though without perceptible foundation, that this was the very person he had towed along outside.

The stocky young man returned presently, showing an uncommonly blunt face and with the programs, which proved sufficient in number. There was an interval in which to read them; then the huge place fell suddenly much darker, except directly to the fore, which burst into great light; the immense curtain majestically ascended, and the time was that of the quarrels of the houses of Capulet and Montague in the sixteenth century. Richard Day passed out of his body sitting upright on the seat and lived in this incarnation of the master dramatist.

But unwittingly he had inhaled a liquor, that was even then feeding his blood; he was even then continuing to inhale it; it crept in at the pores of his right side; it was stealing its sweet breath about his brain. This liquor was the magnetism of a powerful pleasant young feminine presence near to him—too near. Too near for a

clean-cut young man, in his second and twentieth year, redolent of health, with moderately cropped chestnut hair inclined to curl, intelligent forehead, good nose, rather big mouth, full lips, and round chin with a cleft in the centre—too near for him even to remain in the hands of the master dramatist. A warm glow suffused him. His intellectual perception of the illuminated, noble spectacle before him in a frame of night numbed in his brain and he was conscious only of the rich sensation that circulated through him. Metaphorically, senses and emotions lolled on rich colored divans, spread with thick rugs, in the tropical atmosphere of his head. The magically spoken lines of Shakespeare became as so much unfelt, unrecognized, distant sounding jargon. What he had come to be thrilled by, as the dark, breathless audience like a sea about him was thrilled, was in a moment nothing to him. And yet he had not touched her, nor again spoken with her, nor glanced at her.

Only she was there!

CHAPTER XIX

A HUMORIST'S NOTE-BOOK

I ADMIT that (though, indeed, I can claim a very fair collection of authors as acquaintances) I share the popular interest in the idiosyncratic nature of the literary profession. I am as curious as to the occult workings of the minds of authors, the esoteric process by which subtle insinuations of inspiration are translated into works of literary art, as though I had never seen an author—off a platform. I would read the riddle of genius. I am fascinated by its impenetrable mysteries. I would explore the recesses of the creative head.

Therefore, in the presence of the treasure of such incalculable value which is before me, I experience tense intellectual excitement. In the thought of its possession by myself I find the uttermost felicity. What it is is this: it is *a humorous writer's note-book.*

I must tell you the wonderful story—how this

came into my hands, and how, romantically enough, it is, so to say, by the bequest of the author himself, your own possession. The strange circumstances are as follows:

Something like a week ago I received through the post at my place of residence an oblong package. It was similar in shape to an ordinary brick; not so heavy, and somewhat larger. I had ordered nothing from a shop, and so, as the parcel was plainly addressed to myself, I concluded that it must contain a present. As I am very fond of presents, I was, with much eagerness, about to open the package, when I suddenly recollected the newspaper reports of the recent dastardly Bolshevist bomb plots; the sending through the mails, by some apparently organized agency, to prominent persons in all parts of the country these skillfully disguised engines of death and destruction. They were outwardly, I recalled, innocent looking parcels, which when opened blew housemaids to bits, demolished dwellings and, in some instances, accomplished the murder of the personage who had incurred the enmity of the criminals.

I bounded some considerable distance away from the object before me. Though, after a mo-

ment, I did, indeed, reflect that I was not what would probably be regarded as an eminent citizen, and had never felt a sense of power in the government of my country, I could not dissolve a decided distaste toward my undoing this mysterious parcel. Also I did not enjoy seeing it remain there on my table. And, further, I had no inclination to carry it from the room.

In this dilemma it occurred to me to summon the janitor of the apartment house where I reside. When I had explained to him that, because of my having a sore thumb (which made it painful for me to handle things), I wished him to open this package for me—, when I had explained this to him, he told me that he was very much occupied at the moment mending the boiler downstairs, and that he must hasten to this occupation, otherwise the lower floors would shortly be flooded. And he withdrew without further ceremony.

I sat down to consider the situation. I realized that it was a bothersome moral responsibility—placing the lives of others (even if janitors) in jeopardy. But something must be done; and done soon—perhaps there was a time fuse in this thing. A thought came to me (the buzzer of our dumb-waiter sounded at the moment); I de-

cided to go further down the scale in the value of human life to be risked. So I communicated down the shaft to our iceman (one Jack) that I desired his presence in the apartment. Well, the upshot of the matter is that Jack showed no hesitation whatever about coolly putting the package in a pail of water and afterward undoing it.

The parcel proved to be an ordinary cigar-box (labelled outside, in the decorative fashion of cigar-box labels, "Angels of Commerce"); within was a letter resting upon a note-book, and beneath that the manuscripts of two short stories. The submersion of the box would have (most disastrously) obliterated, or gone near to obliterating, the message of the letter and the writing in the note-book and the manuscript, had not (happily) these things been packed tightly into the box by surrounding waste paper.

The letter was from Taffy Topaz, known to us all—a humorist if there ever was one. I cannot say that I had been on intimate terms with Mr. Topaz; indeed (to admit the truth) all my acquaintance with authors is slight. I admire authors so much that it is the joy of my life to be acceptable to them in any degree. I put my-

self in their way at every opportunity. I regard it as a great privilege (as, certainly, it is) to spend freely of my income in entertaining them at meals. And in this way and that it is that I have attained the honor of hobnobbing with a number of writers, when they are not otherwise engaged.

As I say, I had not been on intimate terms with Mr. Topaz; and so I was no little surprised (and, I admit, no little flattered) at this decided attention (whatever it might mean) to me. The letter was not (oh, not at all!) a humorous letter. It was a very solemn letter. It said that Mr. Topaz was just about to go to the war. I was, naturally, puzzled at this: the war is (theoretically) over. I hunted round and found a piece of the wrapping paper which had enclosed the box. On it was the postmark (the paper had dried somewhat); and the stamp bore the date of October 1, 1917. I was still more puzzled as to where the box could have been all this while. Then, I recollected the heroic labors of the post-office in maintaining any kind of a schedule of delivery during the war. My poor friend's box had been goodness knows where all this time!

The letter stated (as I have said) that Mr.

Topaz was about to go to the war—as a newspaper correspondent. It said (oh, it almost made one weep, so solemn was it!) that he might never return from "over there." In case he did not come back (the letter continued), he (Mr. Topaz) wished me to undertake the charge of placing the enclosed manuscripts with some magazine or magazines; the money got from them, though it was inadequate he knew (so he said), he prayed that I would accept as payment for the advances which I had made him from time to time. (Alas! my poor friend, what were those miserable loans compared to the wealth of his society! How I remember that proud day when he called me, so pal-like, a "poor fish"!) But this is not a time to indulge one's grief; I must press on with my story.

The remainder of his literary effects, he said (meaning, of course, the note-book), he desired me (as he knew I had some connection with a certain magazine) to present to the editor of that journal. Little more remains to be said here of Mr. Topaz (my friend). He was not called upon to lay down his life for his country (or his paper) ; after the armistice he went valiantly into Germany; and there (as the papers have re-

ported) he contracted a marriage; and is little likely again to be seen in these parts.

The first page of the note-book contains these entries. It is headed

JOTTINGS

"Good name for a small orphan—Tommy Crandle.

"Fat person—shrugged his stomach.

"Name for a spendthrift—Charles Spending.

"Aphorism—Fear makes cowards of us all.

"Billy Sparks—Fine name for a lawyer.

"Nice name for a landlady—Mrs. Baggs.

"Humorous Christian name for a fat boy—Moscow.

"Name for a clerk—Mr. Fife.

"Good name for someone to cry out on a dark night—Peter Clue! Peter Clue!

"Good name for a sporting character—Bob Paddock.

"Aphorism—A fool and his foot are soon in it.

"Good name for a tea room in Greenwich Village—The Bad Egg.

"Epigrammatic remark—Though somewhat down in the mouth he kept a stiff upper lip."

* * * * * * *

Then follows this on umbrellas, evidently the opening of an unwritten essay:

> And, like umbrellas, with their feathers
> Shield you in all sorts of weathers.
>
> MICHAEL DRAYTON.

"Among all the ingenious engines which man has contrived for his ornament and protection none, certainly, is more richly idiosyncratic than the umbrella. Literary genius has always instinctively recognized this; and doubtless the esoteric fact has been vaguely felt even by the unthinking; but it is a profound truth which, I fear, has had but slight popular appreciation.

"The use of this historic and peculiarly eloquent article of personal property, the umbrella, illustrates pictorially a proverbial allusion to the manifestation of intelligence: it shows that a man has 'sense enough to go in out of the rain.' It reveals not only the profundity of his judgment but the extraordinary play of his cleverness, as it exhibits him as the only animal who after crawling into his hole, figuratively speaking, pulls his hole in after him, or, in other words, carries his roof with him. Further than this, in the idea of carrying an umbrella you find the secret of man's striking success in the world: the intrepidity of

his spirit in his tenacious pursuit of his own affairs defies both the black cloud's downpour and the sun's hot eye."

* * * * * * *

There is this, headed

HUMOR

"There was once a man who was nearly dead from a disease. One day while taking the air a friend cried to him encouragingly, 'Well, I see that you're up and about again.' 'Yes,' replied the sick man good-naturedly, 'I'm able to walk the length of the block now.' This notion was so irresistible that both the quick and the dying burst into laughter."

* * * * * * *

Among the longer entries in this note-book is the following remarkable psychological study, having as its title

TEMPERAMENT

"That morning Kendle had seen himself famous. As he worked he began to feel good in his brain and in his heart and in his stomach. He felt virile, elated, full of power, and strangely

happy. The joy of creating a thing of art was upon him. Thrills ran down his spine and into his legs. As he looked at his work he admired it. He knew that this was good art. He felt that here was genius. He saw himself in a delectable picture, an idol applauded of the multitude, and loved by it. For he believed that the multitude was born, and ate and slept, and squabbled among itself, and acquired property, and begot offspring, but to await the arrival of genius. And the only genius he knew was genius in eccentric painting. The only genius worth while that is, for there is a genius that invents labor-saving machines, telephones, X-rays, and so forth; but nobody loves that genius. It occurred to him that he was a very lovable man, with all his faults (his faults were the lovable ones of genius), and he would soon have achieved a distinction that would make any woman proud of him. He determined to renew his addresses to——.

"Somehow in the evening his intoxication had died down. He felt very sad. His work lay before him with so little eccentricity to it that he was ashamed. His sense of power had quite departed. And now he dismally felt that he would never amount to anything. He was a failure.

An idle, wicked, disgraceful fellow, no good in the world, and not worth any woman's attention. His heart felt sick when he thought this. He was very miserable. He despised himself. So he sighed. It would have been better, he thought, if he had apprenticed himself to the plumber's trade in his boyhood. He would in that case have grown up happy and contented, remained at home and done his duty, respected by his neighbors and himself, though only a plumber. A plumber is a good honest man that pays his debts.

"At home! Why was he not there, anyway? What good was he doing away from there? There was his mother, in her declining years. Was his place not by her side? He would never desert his mother, he thought. And Sis! there was Sis. He would never desert Sis. How good they had been to him! How they believed in him! (he squirmed) how they believed in him still. He imagined them showing his most sensible pictures around to the neighbors. 'My son is an artist,' he heard his mother say. His flesh crawled. How mad he had been! How contemptible he was! Still a man was not hopeless who had a soul for such feelings as he had now. He would reform. He would henceforth eschew

the company of such as Walker. He enumerated his vices and renounced them one by one. He began life over again. He would bask in the simple domestic pleasures of his mother in her declining years, and Sis. He would get up very early every morning and go to his humble toil before it was quite light. He felt himself walking along in the chill of dawn—the street lamps still lit. He would work hard all day. He would always tell the truth. Every Saturday night he would come home tired out, with fifteen dollars in his pocket. This he would throw into his mother's lap. 'Here, mother,' he would say in a fine manly voice, 'here are fifteen dollars.' His mother would put her apron to her eyes, and look at him through tears of pride and joy. He would wear old clothes and be very honest and upright looking, the sort of young man that Russell Sage would have approved, that Sis might dress. He would not mind the sneers and gibes of the world, for he would be *right*.

"He looked defiantly around the room for a few sneers and gibes."

CHAPTER XX

INCLUDING STUDIES OF TRAFFIC "COPS"

THE other day it was such a pleasant April day I thought I'd take the afternoon off. It was such a very pleasant day that I didn't want to go anywhere in particular. Do you ever feel that way? I mean like you just wanted to be by yourself and sit down and think awhile.

Later on, you have an idea, you'll come back into things much refreshed. But the thought of answering these letters now, or of doing this or doing that, kind of lets you down inside your stomach. Your brain seems to have dropped down somewhere behind your ears. If that fellow across the office comes over to pull another of his bright ideas on you you think you'll probably scream, or brain him, or something. He's getting terrible, anyhow.

You have any number of excellent friends, and (ordinarily) you are quite fond of them. Perhaps you will go to see one of them. There's Ed, you've been wanting for you don't know

how long to go round and see him. Never seemed to have time. But no; you don't want to see Ed—today. Same way with all the others, as you go over the list of them in your mind. Couldn't bear to see any of 'em—not this afternoon. For one thing, they're all so selfish. . . . So interested in their own affairs.

As I was straightening up my desk an idea came to me about jobs. Seems to me that when I have a job I'm all the while worrying about how to break out of it. I think: Well, I'm tied up here until the first of the year; but I'll sure shake it after that; too cramped and limited. And then when I am out of a job I immediately begin to worry about how to get another one. That's Life, I guess.

I turned uptown and floated along with the current of the Avenue throng. It was a glittering April throng. The newest stockings were out. I had not seen them before. The newest stockings (you will have noted) are so very, very thin and the pores (so to say) in them are so large that they give the ladies who wear them the agreeable effect of being bare-legged.

At Thirty-fourth Street the traffic policeman on post at our side of this corner, by an outward

gesture of his arms pressed back the sidewalk stream for a couple of moments of cross-town vehicular traffic. He stood within a few inches of the front row of the largely feminine crush. Whenever an impatient pedestrian broke through the line he had formed and attempted to dart across the street he emitted a peculiar little whistle followed by the admonishment, "Hold on, lady!" or "Hey there, mister!" Thus having returned the derelict to cover, he would smile very intimately, with a kind of sly cuteness, at the more handsome young women directly before him —who invariably tittered back at him. And thus, frequently, a little conversation was started.

Now as a vigilant historian of the social scene this matter of the gallant relations of traffic policemen to perambulating ladies of somewhat fashionable, even patrician aspect, I find highly interesting. It is a subject which does not seem to have been much examined into.

Why, exactly, should flowers of débutante-Bryn-Mawr appearance look with something like tenderness at policemen? Seems to me I have read now and then in the papers strikingly romantic stories wherein a mounted policeman in the park (formerly a cowboy) saved the life of an

equestrienne heiress on a runaway mount, and was rewarded the next day (or something like that) with her hand. Such a story my mind always gladly accepts as one of the dramatic instances where life artistically imitates the movies. Crossing Thirty-fourth Street, however, seems to me another matter.

And what system of selection operates in the Department whereby this officer or that is chosen from among all his brethren for the paradisaical job of being beau of a fashionable crossing? And would you not think that a more uniform judgment would be exercised in the election of men to such Brummellian duties? Adonises in the traffic force I have, indeed, seen (there is one at Forty-second Street), but this chap of whom I have just been speaking (the whimsical whistler) certainly was not one of them. He was what is called "pie-faced." Hunched up his shoulders like an owl. Yet his ogling of loveliness in new spring attire was completely successful, was in no instance that I observed resented, was received with arch merriment. Indeed, his heavy, pink-tea attentions were obviously regarded as quite flattering by the fair recipients! As he let the tide break to cross

the street it was plain, from bright glances backward, that he had fluttered little hearts which would smile upon him again. And so, in such a Romeo-like manner, does this bulky sentimentalist, armed with concealed weapons, have dalliance with the passing days. What you 'spose it is about him gives him his fascination in flashing eyes haughty to the rest of the masculine world—his bright buttons, or what?

Yes; these curious and romantic little relationships between traffic cops on social duty, so to say, and their dainty admirers are not (in some instances at least) so transient as to be merely the exchange of roguish words and soft glances of the moment. There is that really august being of matinée-idol figure at—well, let us say at Forty-second Street. Sir Walter Raleigh could not with more courtliness pilot his fair freight across the Avenue. So it was the day after Christmas I saw not one but several of his young friends blushingly put dainty packages into his hands.

Is there not an excellent O. Henry sort of story in this piquant city situation?

Well, floating like a cork upon a river I drifted along up the Avenue. I passed a man I had

not seen for several years. Yes; that certainly was the fellow I used to know. And yet he was an altogether different being now, too. The sort of a shock I got has perhaps also been experienced by you. Only a short time ago, it seemed to me, this friend of mine had been robust and ruddy, masterful and gay, in the prime of his years. I had somehow innocently expected him always to be so. Just as I find it very unreal to think of myself in any other way than I am now. Don't you? As to yourself, I mean. He was quite grey. His shoulders hung forward. His chest seemed to have fallen in on itself. His legs moved back and forth without ever altogether straightening out. He had a whipped look. Wrinkled clothes and dusty black derby hat, he was conspicuous in the peacockean scene. And yet on a time he had been, I knew, as much a conqueror of hearts as any policeman. So would it sometime be with me—like this?

What do you know about that! In the next block another acquaintance of old I saw. But when I had known him he was stooped and little and thin and dried up and cringing. He worked in a basement and did not wear a collar, at least by day. He used to look very old. Now here

he was swinging along looking very much like Mr. Caruso, or some such personage as that.

How may this phenomenon be accounted for, what was the misfortune of one of these persons and the secret of the other? I know a man who has a theory which, at least, sounds all right. It is not buttermilk nor monkey glands, he contends, which will keep a man young and stalwart so much as (what he calls) an objective in life —a distant rampart to take, a golden fleece to pursue. That is why, he declares, scientists and artists frequently live happy and alert to such a great age: Thomas A. Edison, Leonardo Da Vinci and the Jap chap (what's his name? Hokusai) who at a hundred and ten or thereabout was called "the old man mad about painting."

Maybe it was thinking of that idea, maybe it was the fearsome thought of that dusty derby hat of my friend's which haunted my mind, or maybe my competitive instincts had been aroused from spring slumber by the spectacle of my Caruso-like friend careering along, anyhow a decidedly bugged-up feeling began to flow through me; I wavered in my loitering, I turned, my sails (so to speak) caught the wind, and I laid my

course abruptly back to the office. I had suddenly a great itch to get at all those letters.

I was very glad to see that fellow across the office from me. He is a good fellow and very helpful. I said to him, "Look here, what do you think about this idea for getting business?"

"Oh, my goodness!" he said; "it's altogether too fine a day to think about work. I'd just like to go out and wander up the Avenue with nothing on my mind but my hair."

CHAPTER XXI

THREE WORDS ABOUT LITERATURE

A FRIEND of mine (and aside from this error a very fine friend he is, too) not long ago published a book which he declared, in his Preface, should be read in bed. He insisted, to such an extent was he the victim of a remarkable and pernicious fallacy which I find here and there, that this book could not otherwise be properly enjoyed.

Now the difficulty about this particular book, that is the circumstance wherein my friend has got me in a position where it is not so easy for me to overturn him all at once, is this: one, not knowing any better, might take the author's advice, and find pleasure reading the book in bed, not being aware that this simply was because here was a book that one would find pleasure in reading anywhere. But because you have got hold of a book which it is possible to enjoy reading in the wrong way, it naturally follows (does it

not?) that you'd enjoy it much more reading it in the right way. That, I should say, was simple and logical enough.

I know, I know! I'm coming to that: there are plenty of other people who have this ridiculous reading-in-bed idea. There, for instance, is Richard Le Gallienne. I had a letter from him awhile ago, in which he remarked that it was his practice to do most of his reading in bed. Then I had a letter recently from Meredith Nicholson, in which there was some such absurd phrase as "going to bed and reading until the cock crows." Also I one time read an essay, a very pleasant essay outside the mistaken notion of its main theme, by Michael Monahan, which was largely about the pleasure of reading in bed. Spoke of the delights of being tucked in, with what satisfaction you got the light just right, and all that.

It must, of course, be acknowledged that all these gentlemen are, if perverse in their method, persons of some reading. However, a fact such as that, an accident as you might say, cannot be permitted to upset the course of a profound argument. Why! as to that, a suspicion just occurs to me that maybe someone could dig up Lamb, Hazlitt, Mark Twain, Coleridge, Leigh

Hunt, Cowper (perhaps all of them, and more) to the effect that it is pleasant to read in bed. Didn't Thackeray have some nonsense about "bedside books"? *I* haven't time to refute each of these persons separately. It is sufficient, I take it, to roll into one point of attack all this bed-reading heresy, from whatever quarters it comes, and put an end to that.

Understand me; I have no complaint against the reading in bed of persons confined there through physical disability. The world war which brought more people to bed for indefinite periods than any other matter since time began thereby probably got more souls into the way of reading than seventeen times several hundred schools ever did. All of them, however, would find that they were much better off in the matter of reading when they had got out of bed. What I say is that, in a manner of speaking, there is no use in taking the air in a wheel-chair if you can take it on horseback. Why do a thing in a halfway fashion when you can go to it right?

Another thing. There are people (I've seen them at it) who read on porches. Sometimes in swings, rocking to and fro. Even in hammocks, slung above the ground from trees. On trains,

too. I have (with my own ears) heard people say that they would "take a book" and go out into the park, or into the woods, or out in a boat, or up on the mountain, or by the sea, or any conceivable place except where one should go to read.

All of these ways of reading are worse, if anything can be worse than that, than reading in bed. Because in bed you do, at least, have your mind sandwiched within doors. You do not feel the surge and rumble of the world—the sound and movement of the things of which literature is made; but any contact with which (at the moment of reading) is destructive to the illusion which it is the province of literature to create.

For literature (reading it, I mean here) is, in this, like love: Richest are the returns to that one whose passion is most complete in its surrender. And a man lapping his frame in soft indolence, though he have a book in his hand, is indulging in sensuous physical pleasure at least equally with intellectual receptivity or aesthetic appreciation. No. Reading should not be taken as an opiate.

The way to read, then—but, a moment more; a couple of other points are to be cleared up. There is much babble of slippers and dressing-

gowns, easy chairs and "soft lights" in connection with the comments about the pleasures, the "delights" as I believe some people say, of reading.

What is wanted to *know* the relish to be got from reading is, first (of course), an uncommon book. And by that term is meant merely one uncommonly suited to the spirit of the reader. (The only perfect definition, that, of a "good book.") Some people still read Stevenson. Well, there's no great harm in that. Providing you read him (or anybody else) as follows:

You should read as you should die—with your boots on. You take a wooden chair, without arms, such (this is the best) as is commonly called a "kitchen chair." It has a good, hard seat. You sit upright in this, crossing and recrossing your legs as they tire. Nearby you is a good, strong light, one with a tonic effect, a light that keeps your eyes wide open. You sit facing a dull, blank wall. No pictures or other ornaments or decorations should be on this wall, as, in case such things are there, and you happen to raise your eyes for an instant, in ecstasy or in thought, your vision lights upon one of these things; and the heart which you have given your

author is, certainly in some measure, alienated from him. Maybe, indeed, you go back to him almost at once. But then harm has been done —you have not read with supreme abandon.

CHAPTER XXII

RECOLLECTIONS OF LANDLADIES

THERE is no figure in the human scene which makes so unctuous an appeal to our relish of humanity as the landlady. When the landlady comes upon the stage at the theatre, we all awaken to an expectation of delight in the characteristic manifestations of her nature, and seldom are disappointed. The genius of the greatest of authors always unfolds with particular warmth in the presence of their landladies. A moment's reflection will recall a procession of immortal landladies. Whether it is that the colorful calling of landlady cultivates in one a peculiar richness of human nature, or whether landladies are born and not made—those with characters of especial tang and savor instinctively adopting this occupation,—I cannot say, but the fact is indisputable that landladies are not as other persons are. No one ever saw a hum-

drum landlady. A commonplace person as a landlady is unthinkable.

Now I think I may say that all my life, or nearly all, I have been an eager and earnest student of landladies. I am, indeed, much more familiar with the genus landlady than with courts and kings, or with eminent personages generally such as supply the material for most of those who write their recollections. Thus I am competent, I think, to speak on a subject curiously neglected by the memorist.

One who makes a culture of landladies comes in time to have a flair for these racy beings, and is drawn by a happy intuition to the habitats of those most resplendent in the qualities of their kind. Of course, one never can tell what life will bring forth, but it seems to me that my present landlady marks the top of my career as a connoisseur, an amateur, of landladies. She is strikingly reminiscent of an English landlady. And England, particularly London, is, as all the world knows, to the devotee of landladies what Africa is to the big game sportsman—his paradise. There the species comes to luxuriant flower, so that to possess with the mind one or two well-developed London landladies is never to be

without food for entertainment. My present landlady, to return, is of course a widow. While it may be, for aught I know, that all widows are not landladies, with very few exceptions all landladies worthy of the name are widows. Those who are not widows outright are, as you might say, widows in a sense. That is, while their husbands may accurately be spoken of as living, and indeed are visible, they do not exist in the normal rôle of husband. The commercial impulses of the bona-fide husband have died in them, generally through their attachment to alcoholic liquor, and they become satellites, hewers of wood and drawers of water, to the genius awakened by circumstances in their wives.

I one time had a landlady of this origin in Norwalk, Connecticut. She was a woman of angular frame, with a face of flint, a tongue of vinegar, and a heart of gold. This, I have found in my travels, is the type of the semi-widowed landlady. I had another such an identical one in Topeka, Kansas. The asperity, doubtless, is occasioned by biting disillusionment in the romance of long ago, but it is external; frost on the window; at the heart's core wells the sense of universe-embracing maternity which makes the character of

the landlady by vocation sublime. All semi-widowed landladies have (it is their divine inspiration) large families of half-grown sons. My landlady of Norwalk grumbled continually; she could be heard out in the kitchen complaining in a shrill, querulous tone that, with things as high as they were, people would be crazy to expect meat twice a day. Yet she had at her board the meanest, most low-down, ornery, contemptible, despicable cuss in human form I ever knew, and the only fault I ever heard her find with him was that he didn't eat enough.

The erudite in landladies have, of course, cognizance of a class which are in no degree widows. Those of this department of the race, however, frequently are not landladies in fibre, but merely incidentally. They are young wives who for a transient period seek to help out in the domestic economy by taking a few lodgers who come with unexceptionable references. As wives doubtless they are meritorious; but no monument need be erected to them as landladies. Though I should like to see in the principal public square of every town and city a monument designed by an artist of ability placed to the enduring glory of the landladies of that place. For are not landladies

ancient institutions fostering the public weal, and in their field not a whit less deserving of homage than governors and soldiers? I would say to a nation, show me your landladies and I will tell you your destiny. I should be remiss, however, in my chronicle did I not note that among these partial and ephemeral landladies occasionally are to be found pronounced landlady potentialities. I recall a landlady I had on Montague Street, Brooklyn Heights, whose passion for cleaning amounted to a mania. This young person's housewifery frenzy always put me in mind of another soul who could not rest—Hokusai, who at about a hundred and ten was spoken of as "the old man mad about painting."

Hovering about, tortured by a desire to begin, when I left for my breakfast, she was still at it upon my return from my morning stroll, my door barricaded by articles of dismembered furniture; still at it when I came back a bit impatiently from a second walk; still at it while I read the paper in her dining-room. And so without surcease throughout the march of days and seasons. She unscrewed the knobs of the bed to polish the threads thereof; she removed penpoints from penholders and made them to shine like

burnished gold. I had another landlady moved by the same springs of feeling, on Spruce Street, Philadelphia. Later, I heard, her husband died, and she espoused her latent career.

There is in the galaxy of landladies quite another type, an exotic plant in the wondrously competent sisterhood, specimens of which may be found blooming here and there like some rare orchid. I mean the fragile, lady landlady, the clinging vine bereft of the supporting husband oak. Such was Mrs. Knoll, of Central Avenue, Indianapolis, a little, plump, rounded body, exceedingly bright, pleasant, intelligent, amiable, and helpless; all of which qualities shone from her very agreeable face and person. In her youth no doubt she was a type of beauty, and she remained very well preserved. "Life and vanity and disappointment had slipped away" (in the Thackerian words) from Dr. Knoll some years before; and his widow and only child, Miss Knoll, were left in possession of the old family home, and nothing more. They could not bear to leave it, that would "break their hearts," said good, ineffectual Mrs. Knoll; so it was viewed by them, unfortunately somewhat fallaciously, in the light of a possible support.

The Doctor evidently was a man of books, and his widow had sought, more and more, companionship in reading. Life—the actual world about her, that is—, and vanity, but not disappointment, had, in a manner of speaking, slipped from her, too. And she had turned to that great world of shadows. "In books," she said, "I can choose my own company." She had plighted her troth in youth to Dickens and to Thackeray, and to these she had remained ever faithful. In a world of false books and unsafe friends she knew that she had by the hand two true spirits. Jane Austen she loaned me with tremulous pleasure. And she was very fond of Mr. Howells, with whom, she said she lived a great deal; and the Kentons, the Laphams, and the Marches, were characters better known to her "than her next-door neighbors." But it must be confessed that the tender perfume of Mrs. Knoll was not altogether an equivalent in the sphere of her passive efforts to the homely vegetable odor of the authentic landlady.

In great cities, amid the sheen of civilization, is to be found just adjacent to smart quarters of the town the tulip in the variegated garden of landladies—the finished, polished stone gath-

ered from the mine, the bird of plumage of the species; I mean, of course, the landlady *du beau monde,* the modish landlady, or perhaps I should say, the professional hostess, as it were. For it seems rather vulgar, a thing repellent to the finer sensibilities, to touch this distinguished figure of immaculate artificiality with the plebeian term of "landlady." The personages of this type are, so to say, of the peerage of their order. Such a Lady Drew it was whose guest I became for a time on Madison Avenue, New York. With silvered hair like a powdered coiffure; softly tinted with the delicate enamel of cosmetic; rich and stately of corsage—this expensive and highly sophisticated presence presided, in the subdued tone of the best society, over the nicely adjusted machinery of her smart establishment by the authority of a consciousness of highly cultivated efficiency and an aroma of unexceptionable standards.

This consummate hostess type of landlady is, of course, one which the passionate collector will preserve in the cabinet of his mind with tremulous happiness in the sheer preciosity of it. I cannot but feel, however, myself, that this type fails of complete perfection as a work of art in

this: that in every work of the first genius, it cannot be denied, there is always a strain of coarseness. And perhaps I should confess that my own taste in landladies, though I hope it is not undiscriminating, leans a bit toward the popular taste, the relish of the Rabelaisian.

Stevenson has observed that most men of high destinies have even high-sounding names. And anyone who has reflected at all upon the phenomenon of landladies must have been struck by the singularly idiosyncratic character of their names. Indeed, an infallible way to pick out a competent landlady from an advertisement is by her name. Is it a happy name for a landlady? Go there! As her name is, so is her nature. I one time had a landlady on Broome Street, New York, whom the gods named Mrs. Brew. I one time had a landlady (in Milligan Place, Manhattan) of the name of Mrs. Boggs. One time I had a landlady just off the East India Dock Road, London, whose name was Wigger. I shall always cherish the memory of the landlady I had down in Surrey, Mrs. Cheeseman. One and all, these ladies, as landladies, were without stain.

Regarded as a bibelot, Mrs. Wigger was, I think, of the first perfection. In her own genre,

so to say, she was as finished, as impossible of improvement, as an Elgin marble, a Grecian urn, a bit of Chinese blue and white, a fan of old Japan, a Vermeer, a Whistler symphony, a caricature by Max Beerbohm. She was of massive mould and very individually shapen. Her face was very large and very red and heavily pock-marked. In her bizarre garments, in some indefinable way she imparted to the character of the born slattern something of the Grand Style. Her utterance was quavered in a weird, cracked voice, which had somewhat an effect as of the wind crying high aloft in a ship's rigging. She slipslod about, always a bit unsteadily. Her movements and her manner generally, I felt, made it not unreasonable to suppose that she had in secret certain habits no longer widely approved by society. The apple of her eye was an unkempt parrot which spent its days in vainly attempting to ascend the embracing sides of a tin bathtub.

Landladies, beyond all other persons, have the esoteric power of becoming for one the geniuses of places. It would, for instance, be quite impossible for anyone to visualize my Mrs. Cheeseman torn from, as you might saw her context.

If you were asked to describe Mrs. Cheeseman you would naturally do it in this way: You would say, "Well, I wonder what has become of the sweetest, quaintest, fairest old inn in all England!" And into your mind would come a rapid cinematograph picture:

A highway winding out of Dorking, stretching its way between hills to the sea. You round a turn and see before you long, low, glistening white stables—the stables, evidently, of a coaching inn. And presently you come into view of an ancient, white, stone building with a "Sussex roof." From a tall post before the door swings the board of the "King's Head." White ducks ride in a pond at the roadside there. Round this inn which you are approaching is the greenest, handsomest hedge ever seen. And along the road beyond you perceive the cottages of a wee village.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." The romance of destiny which in its inscrutable way has been leading you all your long life long to the bosom, if I may so put it, of Mrs. Cheeseman, reveals its beneficence now by carefully graduated steps. At the other side of the main bulk of the "King's Head," which it was given you

first to see, you come upon a delicious little flagged yard leading to another arm of the house, older still, very venerable, with a high roof low descending, a roof which tucks under its projecting wing many oddly placed little latticed windows gayly sporting innumerable tiny panes. Like a miniature cathedral spire, a tall, quaint chimney stands sentinel at one corner, and several chimney-pots peep over the roof's dark crown.

Up this little yard, bounded on one side by a multicolored flower garden whose fragrance bathes you in a softening vapor of perfume, you enter, by a door which requires you to stoop, the wee taproom. Here: a cavernous fireplace, settles are within against its sides, a gigantic blackened crane swung across its middle, and a cubby-hole of a window at its back. Above it is swung an ancient fowling-piece. The stone floor of the room, like the ancient flags without, is worn into dips and hollows. Along the window-sill of an oblong window measuring one wall is a bright parade of potted plants.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that there is something psychic about landladies. As you look about you at the environment in which

you find yourself, you experience a premonition that you are nearing an affinity in the landlady world. It is strange, too, that there are places where you have never been before (in the life which you consciously remember) that give you at once completely the feeling of your having arrived at the home familiar to your spirit. And there presently occurs here an event in your career predetermined (I doubt not) æons and æons ago. A buxom body with the most glorious complexion (you ween) in all England—which is to say in the world—enters the ancient room: a lass whose rosy, honest, pedestrian face and bursting figure are to become forever more for you the connotation of the name "Maggie." The daughter, this, (you later learn) of your Mrs. Cheeseman.

Soon it is all arranged, and you are having your tea—a "meat tea"—in the sitting-room of the "King's Head," your sitting-room now. A bucolic slavey—a person whose cheerful simpleness is like to that of the little creatures of the field—attends you. In this commodious apartment of yours is a great scintillation of chintz; flowers, in pots and vases, everywhere caress the eye; and the fancy is kindled by the spectacle

of many stuffed birds in glass cases. On the heavily flowered wall hangs a handsome specimen of the "glass" (invariably found in England) for forecasting the weather; a "pianoforte," as piquantly old-fashioned as a cocked hat, crosses one end wall; and venerable paintings (which time has mellowed to the richness and the general color effect of an old plug of tobacco), bright sporting prints, and antique oddities of furniture to an extent that it would require a catalogue to name, all combine to give an air of true sitting-room opulence to the chamber.

But of landladies, and the connotations of landladies, one could write a book of several volumes; and it being a very fair day, and a Sunday, and the first cool breath after a very hot summer, I do not think I shall write those volumes this afternoon; I shall go out for a bit of air and a look at the world.

CHAPTER XXIII

AN IDIOSYNCRASY

THEN there's the matter of these dedications. Several weeks ago I received a communication. I think it was sent by Miss Katherine Lord, or maybe it was Hamlin Garland. Anyhow, it was an invitation. The upshot of this invitation was that the annual exhibit of the "best books of the year" held at the National Arts Club, New York City, under the auspices of the Joint Committee of Literary Arts was now going—or was just about to go. Further, it was conveyed that the opening evening of the exhibit would be devoted to a reception for the authors of the books exhibited. Also, that on this evening speeches would be made by a number of distinguished persons acquainted with this matter on the subject of the idiosyncrasies of authors and editors. Further than this, this invitation made clear beyond all manner of reasonable doubt that the pleasure of the evening would

be generally felt to be sadly incomplete without the presence there among the speakers of myself.

The reasons why I was (I am sorry to say) unable to rise to this occasion were two. For one thing, I have known long and intimately a considerable number of authors and editors. Also, I have had the honor of having been several times to the National Arts Club. And (such is my tact and delicacy) I could not feel that this was any fit place for me to discuss the (as the term is) idiosyncrasies with which a decidedly checkered career has acquainted me. Then, as to one of my own idiosyncrasies: I am like George Moore in this which he says, that he is "the only Irishman living or dead who cannot make a speech"—except that I am not an Irishman.

All of this, however, is merely picking up the threads of my thought. What I have in my eye is an idiosyncrasy of authors which doubtless I could have discussed with some propriety. That is, if I were able to discuss before an audience anything at all. Though with this subject, as many of those present were authors (who had their toes along with them) I should have had to exercise more than a little caution, and consid-

erable skill in maintaining a honeyed amiability. Maybe this theme wouldn't have done at all either.

You see, it's this way: Many people, I believe, do not read the introductions, prefaces, forewords (and whatever else such things are called) to books. I always do. Perhaps this is a habit formed during a number of years spent as a professional reviewer. If you read the introduction, preface (or whatever it's called), to a book you can generally pick up pretty much what the author thought he was about when he wrote it, the points he intended to make in the work, the circumstances in which he wrote it, and so on. This is a great time and labor saving procedure. All you've got to do then is to read a bit in the volume here and there to taste the style, pick up a few errors of fact or grammar, glance at the "conclusion," where the author sums up, to see whether or not he got anywhere—and so far as you are further put out by having this book on your hands it might just as well never have been written. But I am drifting. That's one reason I can't make a speech. Never can recollect what it was I set out to say.

Oh, yes! About these dedications. Less peo-

ple than read prefaces, I fancy, read the dedications of books. I always read 'em. I read them when I have no intention whatever of reading the volumes which they—well, dedicate. They are fine—dedications. Better, far better, than old tombstones. But never judge a book by its dedication.

I one time knew a man, of a most decidedly humorous cast of mind, who was a great spendthrift, an A 1 wastrel. He ran through everything his father left him (a very fair little fortune), and then when he had run through, in advance of that gentleman's death, everything his wife was to inherit from his father-in-law he had no means whatever. He had a daughter. Without, it was clearly evident, the least suspicion of the pleasant humor of this, he named her Hope. She was a small child. And—it's absurd, I know; but 'tis so; there was not a particle of conscious irony in it; this child's name was the one blind spot in her father's sense of the ridiculous—her parents frequently referred to her affectionately as "little Hope."

So, quite so, with dedications. Whenever, or perhaps we had better say frequently, when a man writes a particularly worthless book he lays

the deed (in his dedication of it) onto his wife, "without whose constant devotion," etc., etc., etc., "this work would never have come into being." Amen! Or he says that it is inscribed "To—my gentlest friend—and severest critic—my aged Grandmother." Or maybe he accuses his little daughter, "whose tiny hands have led me." Again he may say benignantly: "To—my faithful friend—Murray Hill—who made possible this volume"; or "the illumination of whose personality has lighted my way to truth."

Doubtless he means well, this author. And, in most cases, highly probable it is that his magnanimous sentiments are O. K. all round. For to the minds of what would probably be called "right-thinking" persons is not having a book dedicated to you the equivalent, almost, of having a career yourself? I know a very distinguished American novelist—well, I'll tell you who he is: Booth Tarkington—who has told me this: Time and again he has been relentlessly pursued by some person unknown to him who, in the belief that did he once hear it he would surely use it as material for his next book, wished to tell him the story of his life. This life, according to the communications received by the nov-

elist, was in every case one of the most remarkable ever lived by man. It was, in every case, most extraordinary in, among a variety of other singular things, this: the abounding in it of the most amazing coincidences. And so on, and so on, and so on. One of these romantic personages nailed the novelist somewhere coming out of a doorway one day, and contrived to compel him to sit down and listen to the life story. He was an old, old man, this chap, and firmly convinced that the tale of his many days (as simple, commonplace, dull and monotonous an existence as ever was conceived) was unique. Now he did not want any pay for telling his story; he had no design on any royalty to come from the great book to be made out of it; no, not at all. All he asked—and that, he thought, was fair enough—was that the book be dedicated to him. And so it was with them all, all of those with the remarkable, obscure, romantic, humdrum lives. So much for that.

Dedications run the whole gamut of the emotions. A type of author very tonic to the spirit is that one whose soul embraces not merely an individual but which enfolds in its heroic sweep a nation, a people, or some mighty idea. What,

for instance, could be more vast in the grandeur of its sweep than this—which I came upon the other day in a modest little volume? "To the Children of Destiny." The Great War, which has wrought so much evil and inspired so much literature, is responsible for a flood of noble, lofty dedications. The merest snooping through a bunch of recent war books turns up, among a multitude more, the following: "To the Mothers of America." "To—the Loyalty and Patriotism—of the—American People." "To the Hour —When the Troops Turn Home." "To All the Men at the Front."

I should not affirm, of course, that there is anything new under the sun. And it is very probable that ever since this psychic literature began (whenever it began) authors resident beyond the stars have, naturally enough, dedicated their manuscripts submitted to earthly publishers to folks back in the old home, so to say. But with the War, which has so greatly stimulated literary activity on the other side of life, the dedications of these (to put it so) expatriated authors have perhaps become (in a manner of speaking) loftier in tone than ever before. As a sample of the present state of exalted feeling of authors

of this sort I copy the following dedication from the recently published book of a writer "gone West": "To the heroic women of the world, the mothers, wives and sweethearts who bravely sent us forth to battle for a great cause:—we who have crossed the Great Divide salute you."

I wish, I do wish, I had at hand a book which I saw a number of years ago. . . . As examples of persons to whom books have been dedicated may be specified The Deity, The Virgin Mary, Royalty and Dignitaries of Church and State, "The Reader," and the author himself. Many of the pleasantest dedications have been to children. Besides armies and navies, countries, states, cities and their inhabitants, books have also been dedicated to institutions and societies, to animals, to things spiritual, and to things inanimate. An attractive example of a dedication to Deity is furnished by one John Leycaeter, who, in 1649, dedicated his "Civill Warres of England, Briefly Related from his Majesties First Setting Up his Standard, 1641, to this Present Personall Hopefull Treaty"—"To the Honour and Glory of the Infinite, Immense, and Incomprehensible Majesty of Jehovah, the Fountaine of all Excellencies, the Lord of Hosts,

the Giver of all Victories, and the God of Peace." He continued in a poem, "By J. O. Ley, a small crumme of mortality."

But about that book I saw some time ago. You, of course, remember that prayer in "Tom Sawyer" (or somewhere else in Mark Twain) where the great-hearted minister called upon the Lord to bless the President of the United States, the President's Cabinet, the Senate of the United States, the governors of each of the states, and their legislatures, the mayors of all the cities, and all the towns, of the United States, and the inhabitants — grandmothers and grandfathers, mothers and wives, husbands and fathers, sons and daughters, bachelors and little children—of every hamlet, town and city of the United States, also of all the countryside thereof. Well, this book of which I am speaking,—this minister in the august range and compass of his prayer had nothing on its dedication. It was published, as I recollect, by the author; printed on very woody wood-pulp paper by a job press, and had a coarse screen frontispiece portrait of the author, whose name has long since left me. What it was about I do not remember. That is a little matter. It lives in my mind, and should live in the memory

of the world, by its dedication; which, I recall, in part was: "To the Sultan of Turkey—the Emperor of Japan—the Czar of Russia—the Emperor of Germany—the President of France—the King of England—the President of the United States—and to God."

But it was in an elder day that they really knew how to write sonorous dedications. If I should write a book (and the idea of having one to dedicate tempts me greatly) I'd pick out some important personage, such as Benjamin De Casseres, or Frank Crowinshield, or Charles Hanson Towne, or somebody like that. Then I would take as the model for my dedication that one, say, of Boswell's to Sir Joshua Reynolds. I am afraid you have not read it lately. And so, for the joy the meeting of it again will give you, I will copy it out. It goes as follows:

My Dear Sir,—Every liberal motive that can actuate an Authour in the dedication of his labours, concurs in directing me to you, as the person to whom the following Work should be inscribed.

If there be a pleasure in celebrating the distinguished merit of a contemporary, mixed with a certain degree of vanity not altogether inexcusable, in appearing fully sensible of it, where can I find one, in complimenting whom I can with more general approbation gratify those feelings? Your excellence not only in the Art over which you have long presided with unrivalled fame, but also in Phi-

losophy and elegant Literature, is well known to the present, and will continue to be the admiration of future ages. Your equal and placid temper, your variety of conversation, your true politeness, by which you are so amiable in private society, and that enlarged hospitality which has long made your house a common centre of union for the great and accomplished, the learned, and the ingenious; all these qualities I can, in perfect confidence of not being accused of flattery, ascribe to you.

If a man may indulge an honest pride, in having it known to the world, that he has been thought worthy of particular attention by a person of the first eminence in the age in which he lived, whose company has been universally courted, I am justified in availing myself of the usual privilege of a Dedication, when I mention that there has been a long and uninterrupted friendship between us.

If gratitude should be acknowledged for favours received, I have this opportunity, my dear Sir, most sincerely to thank you for the many happy hours which I owe to your kindness,—for the cordiality with which you have at all times been pleased to welcome me,—for the number of valuable acquaintances to whom you have introduced me,—for the *noctes cænæque Deûm*, which I have enjoyed under your roof.

If a work should be inscribed to one who is master of the subject of it, and whose approbation, therefore, must ensure it credit and success, the Life of Dr. Johnson is, with the greatest propriety, dedicated to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was the intimate and beloved friend of that great man; the friend, whom he declared to be "the most invulnerable man he knew; whom, if he should quarrel with him, he should find the most difficulty how to abuse." You, my dear Sir, studied him, and knew him well: you venerated and admired him. Yet, luminous as he was upon the whole, you perceived all the shades which mingled in the grand composition; all the peculiarities and slight blemishes which marked the literary Colossus. Your very warm commendation of the specimen which I gave in my "Journal of a

Tour to the Hebrides," of my being able to preserve his conversation in an authentik and lively manner, which opinion the Publik has confirmed, was the best encouragement for me to persevere in my purpose of producing the whole of my stores. . . .

I am, my dear Sir,

Your much obliged friend,

And faithful humble servant,

London, April 20, 1791. JAMES BOSWELL.

In a more modern style of composition the epistolary form of dedication is still employed. I wish I had not (one time when I was moving) lost that copy I had, English edition, of George Moore's book "The Lake." I have a feeling that the dedicatory letter there, in French, was an admirable example of its kind of thing. If you happen to have a copy of the book, why don't you look it up?

When poems are written as dedications an established convention is followed. You affect at the beginning (in this formula) to be very humble in spirit, deeply modest in your conception of your powers. You speak, if your book is verse, of your "fragile rhyme," or (with Patmore) you "drag a rumbling wain." Again perhaps you speak (in the words of Burns) of your "wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble," or you call Southwell to witness that:

He that high growth on cedars did bestow,
Gave also lowly mushrumps leave to grow.

And so on. At any rate, you always do this. Then you say that his (or her) eyes for whom the book was written will change the dross to gold, the "blind words" to "authentic song," the "mushrump" to a flower, or some such thing. So, after all, you skillfully contrive to leave your book to the reader on a rather high, confident note. Any other way of writing a dedicatory poem to a book of verse (being out of the tradition altogether) is, I take it, bad, very bad, literary etiquette.

Numerous dedications have considerable fame. There is that enigmatical one to "Mr. W. H.," prefixed by Thomas Thorpe, bookseller of London, to Shakespeare's Sonnets. And Dr. Johnson's scathing definition of a patron when Lord Chesterfield fell short of Johnson's expectations in the amount which he contributed to the publication of the famous dictionary men will not willingly let die. Another celebrated dedication is that of "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies" —"To the Rare Few, who, early in life, have rid themselves of the Friendship of the Many." Laurence Sterne's solemn "putting up fairly to

public sale" to an imaginary lord a dedication to "Tristram Shandy" is not without merit. John Burroughs was felicitous in his dedication of "Bird and Bough"—"To the kinglet that sang in my evergreens in October and made me think it was May." And a very amiable dedication prefixed to "The Bashful Earthquake," by Oliver Herford, illustrated by the author, is this: "To the Illustrator, in grateful acknowledgment of his amiable condescension in lending his exquisite and delicate art to the embellishment of these poor verses, from his sincerest admirer, The Author." Mr. Herford's latest book (at the time of this writing), "This Giddy Globe," is dedicated so: "To President Wilson (With all his faults he quotes me still)."

A clever dedication, I think, is that of Christopher Morley's "Shandygaff"—"To The Miehle Printing Press—More Sinned Against Than Sinning." A dedication intended to be clever, and one frequently seen, is, in effect, "To the Hesitating Purchaser." A certain appropriateness is presented in a recent book on advertising, "Respectfully dedicated to the men who invest millions of dollars a year in national advertising." And some nimbleness of wit is attained in

the inscription of the book "Why Worry"—"To my long-suffering family and circle of friends, whose patience has been tried by my efforts to eliminate worry, this book is affectionately dedicated." As cheerful a dedication as I have come across is that prefixed by Francis Hackett to his volume "The Invisible Censor"; it is: "To My Wife—Signe Toksvig—whose lack of interest—in this book has been my—constant desperation."

Miss Annie Carroll Moore, supervisor of work with children at the New York Public Library, tells me that the other day a small boy inquired, "Who was the first man to write a book to another man?" I'm sure I don't know. Perhaps this is told somewhere. A number of books and articles concerning dedications, I have heard, are to be found in studious places. I have never read any of them. I remember, however, reviewing for a newspaper a number of years ago (I think it was in 1913) a book, then just published, called "Dedications: An Anthology of the Forms Used from the Earliest Days of Bookmaking to the Present Time." It was compiled by Mary Elizabeth Brown. The volume made handy to the general reader a fairly representative collection of dedications.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SEXLESS CAMERA

THERE is no nicer point, perhaps, in the study of photography as the one true, detached observer of mankind than here: It sees, what man has not seen—as his own representations show, his paintings, his drawings, his sculptures—the feminine underpinning with a quite passive, sexless eye.

In this interesting matter there are two human conceptions. There is the chorus girl style of leg, the expression of piquancy, which does not perhaps appeal to the noblest emotions, but the fascination of which has always haunted man whenever he has delineated anything in a stocking. Then there is the chaste, nude feminine limb of the painter and the sculptor. Both photography shows to be idealization.

When the camera reproduces the chorus girl herself, suddenly strangely plain and painted, there is to the observing and reflective instead of

sauciness the hollowness of sauciness. There can be few things more awful than those silent photographs of some gay chorus, reproducing, as they do, the spectacle with solemn critical aloofness from the spirit. It is as though the dawn of Judgment Day had suddenly broken upon the unspeakably wretched and tawdry scene. There is something, it would seem, indescribably tender, affectionate, in the irony of the gods which arranges that men should display in theatre lobbies, as an inducement to buy tickets of admission within, these death's heads of frivolity. As if the Comic Spirit itself were touched by the charm of the naiveté of man.

But, indeed, twinkling in the sympathetic light upon the Broadway stage, the professional chorus girl leg, well selected no doubt to begin with, and shaped with all the science of art, has beguiled even the reflective. A light intoxicant, it swirls in the veins like champagne for the careless moment it makes. It is pleasant because it is false.

The real leg, remarks the camera, is the amateur leg; it is depressing, but terribly convincing. As it stands in the raw light of the cheap photographer (and this too, too human document,

the likeness of the poor girl who has performed somewhere in curiously home-made looking "tights," and been photographed thus afterward, is one of the stock exhibits of that most realistic of historians, the cheap photographer) the amateur leg decidedly lacks dash. The knee joint somehow seems to work somewhat the wrong way. Sometimes, in circumference, this limb is immense, sometimes the reverse. But the terribleness of it always is that it is so human. That is, it is the leg of an animal. Subconsciously it suggests surgery.

Conspicuous among the postures assumed for its iconoclastic purpose by the genius of photography is that of "art." That fetish of the great body of the unenlightened, the dim feeling that to the enlightened bodily nakedness in pictorial representation is something very fine, is played upon. The "art photograph" is an ironic tour de force. If specimens of this have ever fallen in the way of your observation, then you have reflected upon the strange discrepancy between the female nude as presented in painting and sculpture and in photographs. (Oh, souls of Fragonard, Boucher, Watteau, what romantic rogues you were!) You will have perceived,

with some grim humor, that until the invention of photography, nobody, apparently, had ever seen a nude female figure.

Now there is Edgar Degas,—and it is a curious reflection that in comparison with the work of this pessimist genius who has deliberately brought cynicism to bear upon the female nude, photographs purporting (over their sneer) to be reflections of beauty, give by far the most distressing impression. In the painful realization that they have a kind of truth beyond human art these abominable humbugs are a kind of art. What (you exclaimed) was Schopenhauer's remark about the clouded intellect of *man* which could give the name of the "fair sex" to "that under-sized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, knock-kneed race"?

It may be a long "drive," but it strikes you as a thoughtful observer that there is some biological analogy between "art photographs" and the photographs, to be seen in travel books, of native African women. What a philosopher the camera is! The French savant was very probably contemplating the photograph of some member of a savage tribe when he wrote, in "The Garden of Epicurus" (addressing modern ladies): "But

never think too highly of yourselves, my sisters; you were not, at your first appearance in the world, perfect and fully armed. Your grandmothers in the days of the mammoth and the giant bear did not wield the same dominion over the prehistoric hunters and cave-men which you possess over us. You were useful then, and necessary, but you were not invincible. To tell the truth, in those far-off ages, and for long afterwards, you lacked charm. In those days you were like men, and men were like brutes. To make of you the fearful and wonderful thing you are today—veils: the Empire, crinoline, décolleté, tube, pannier." And, the sexless camera explains, the poetry of man.

CHAPTER XXV

I KNOW AN EDITOR

I KNOW a young woman—a very handsome young woman she is, too. (I have a decided penchant for handsome young women.) But that is beside the point. As I was about to say (when a pleasant but an extraneous idea interrupted me): this young woman the other day took her young husband by the hand and conducted him to the offices of a publisher. Here she mounted him upon a chair (very much, I fancy, as though the child were about to have his hair cut), and she said to the barber—I mean she said to the editor, with whom she had some acquaintance—she said: "This is my husband. He is just out of the army. I have brought him in to have his head shingled"—— No, no! that isn't what she said; I am getting my wires crossed. She said, "I have brought him in to get him a position here."

Said the editor, "What would your son, I mean your husband, like to do?"

"I want him," replied the young woman, "to be an editor."

"Has he ever been an editor?" inquired the editor kindly, as he admired the shape of the young woman's nose.

"No," she answered, stroking his hand (the hand, that is, of her husband), "why, no."

"What has been his experience?" asked the editor, as the thought of all the hard work he had to do in the next hour and a half wrestled in his mind with his pleasure in the young woman's voice.

"Why," she said, "before he went into the army I don't know that he had any particular experience. He was just out of college, you see."

"Oh!" said the editor, "I see. And why," he asked musingly, "do you want him to be an editor?"

"Well, I don't know exactly," answered the young woman, "I just thought it would be rather nice to have him be an editor."

Even so. Day after day, come into publishing houses young persons, and indeed people of all ages, who have a hunch (and apparently nothing more to go by) that they would like to be "an editor." Also, in every other mail, come letters

from aspirants in distant parts setting forth (what they deem) their qualifications.

Now and then someone makes such an application who has been an editor before. It (editing) is probably the only business he knows, and perhaps it is too late (or his spirit is too broken) for him to take up another. So, disillusioned but not misguided, for him there is charity of thought. But the fledglings are in the great majority. Their qualifications (is it necessary to say?) usually are: a university degree, perhaps some association with a college paper, maybe the credit of an article (or a poem) or two published in a minor magazine issued for the Intelligentzia, a very sincere attachment to books of superior worth, a disdain for empyreal literature, openness to a modest salary (to begin), and an abysmal lack of any comprehension of the business of publishing books or magazines. Every little bit turns up one who (it develops) wants a job on the side, as it were, merely to sustain the real business of life, which (maybe) is taking a graduate course at Columbia, or some such thing. And in many cases (it is obvious) the real business of life is writing poetry, or fic-

tion, though to this end a job must be endured—doubtless temporarily.

Now why anyone should want to be an editor beats me. No, I retract. 'Tis quite plain. Ignorance, ma'am, sheer ignorance of the calamity. I know an editor; in fact, I know six. One, indeed, is a brother of mine, another is a cousin, a third an uncle. Before they became editors they used to read books and magazines—for pleasure, sometimes; or again for profit to their souls. Now they do neither. They read only professionally. They can't read anything unless they have to, in the way of business. Before they became editors they led intellectual lives; spiritually they grew continually. They used to be perfectly delighted, excited (as people should be), by hearing of books, of authors, new to them. They were fascinated by the journey of their minds. They might have gone on thus through their years, interested in themselves, interesting to others, pillars of society. They might even, for all their thoughts (then) were inspirations, have written delightful things themselves. In fact, two of them did. But they became editors.

Now they, subconsciously, count the words of manuscripts. They cut articles, like cloth, to fit.

They gauge the "rate" to be paid for this, for that. They cannot take an interest in this because something like it has just appeared somewhere else. They can't take an interest in that because it is not like something that has just made a hit somewhere else. Now when they have something to read they say (like Plim, Bimm, whatever his name was, the veteran hack novelist in the early Barrie story), "I'll begin the damn thing at eight o'clock."

Worst of all, they have lost, totally lost, that shield against adversity, that great joy in days of prosperity, that deep satisfaction of life. I mean, of course, the relish of *buying* books. Everyone knows that to revel in the possession of a book one must covet it before one feels one should buy it. Everyone knows that to love a book jealously one must have made some sacrifice to obtain it. That a library which supplies unending strength to the spirit means in all its parts, a little here, a little there, some self-denial of other things.

But editors, poor fish, are impotent in this high and lasting pleasure; they have lost the power to spend their money for books. They expect books to be given to them free by the publishers. Their money goes for Kelley pool and cigars.

CHAPTER XXVI

A DIP INTO THE UNDERWORLD

"WHEN I go back home," he said, "and tell them about this they won't believe it."

It was a pleasant April Sunday afternoon. We were sitting very comfortably in a saloon over Third Avenue way about the middle of Manhattan Island. Throngs of customers came and went through the front door, whose wicket gate was seldom still. Whiskey glasses twinkled and tinkled all along the long bar. Only here and there in the closely packed line of patrons stood one with a tall "schooner" of beer before him. Harry and Ed, in very soiled white jackets, led an active life.

You see, since theoretically intoxicants were not being sold, there was no occasion for the pretence of being closed on Sunday and confining business to the side door and the back room. On the table between us lay a newspaper. Its headlines proclaimed yesterday's "liquor raids," thou-

sands upon thousands of dollars worth of "rum" confiscated by the city police in the progress of the campaign resulting from the recent passage of the New York State "dry" law.

At the bottom of the page was a little story of the conviction of a delicatessen dealer somewhere on the outskirts of Brooklyn on whose premises had been discovered by the authorities a small amount of wine containing more than one-half of one per cent alcohol.

Pete came in hurriedly. Harry and Ed glanced at him questioningly. He nodded to them as though to say "yes," and dropped into the chair before us. "They're comin'," he remarked. "About half a block off." Every whiskey glass had suddenly disappeared from the bar.

Pete, a little grey man now of about fifty who arises for the day at about noon, has had an interesting career. Once upon a time he was a "bell-hop" in Albany. He is a devoted patron of the silent drama and a man of intellectual interests—making a hobby of clipping from newspapers poems and editorials which impress him and reading them several months later to chance acquaintances who are too drowsy to oppose him. His

connection with this establishment is light and picturesque. His duties are chiefly social. That is, he sees home one after another customers who require that friendly attention. He is perpetually agreeable to the suggestion of gratuitous refreshment. He is very cheerful and gentlemanly in the matter of accommodating his tastes to any liquid from ten-cent beer to ninety-cent Scotch which the purchaser is disposed to pay for.

Here they were! The two police officers strolled in slowly, smiling. In their blue and their gold buttons they looked very respendent against the somewhat shabby scene. Ranged along before the bar were a number of young men in the uniform of private soldiers. There were several sailors. Here was a postman cheering himself on his rounds. There was a huge fellow the nickel plate on whose cap announced that he was a piano mover. The centre of a group, there was a very large man who looked as though he had something darkly to do with ward politics. At one place in the line was a very dapper little Japanese, who produced his money from a wallet carried in his breast pocket. But mostly the motley company was of the riff-raff order of humanity. That is another one of

the curious developments of "prohibition." Here, in all places of this character, you may find an endless number of the sort of men who used to be accustomed to paying as little as ten cents for a drink of very fiery and inferior whiskey, now standing before the bar by the hour and paying from fifty to seventy-five cents for whiskey (if you can call it that) considerably worse. How on earth can they do it? I do not know.

The two policemen moved the length of the room, and came to a halt at the open end of the bar. Here they stood for a couple of moments, observing (I felt with some amusement) Harry and Ed serving their beakers of beer. Then, as though suddenly having a bright idea, one of them made his way along back of the bar to the cigar case at the front end. He stooped, opened the sliding panel at the bottom of this and poked around inside with his club. As he came along behind the bar back to the open end he stooped several times to peer at the shelf below. He joined his comrade, the two of them thrust their heads into the back room, and then moved out through the side door.

"Well, we're safe for another hour," said Pete. "Why couldn't they find the stuff?" I

asked him. "I'll bet you couldn't find it if you'd go behind the bar yourself," he answered. Harry and Ed had found it within two seconds after the shadow of the law had lifted. And the room was humming with the sound of renewed, and somewhat hectic, conviviality. "We'll get caught pretty soon though, I guess," observed Johnnie, the Italian "chef," who on week-days served the economical lunch of roast beef sandwiches and "hot dogs." Harry and Ed laughed in a rather uncomfortable way. But for the present, at least, business was too brisk for their thoughts to be distracted more than a second or two from the job.

"The old man," remarked Pete, referring to the proprietor, "is on a toot again. Been under the weather for about a week now. He always gets that way whenever one of the new law scares comes along. Gets worried or sore or something and that upsets him."

Pete hadn't been very well himself for several days. Sick in bed, he said, yesterday. He never used to be sick at all, "in the old days," he declared, no matter how much he had taken the day before. Never had a headache, or bad stomach, or anything like that. A little nervous,

perhaps, yes. "But it's the kind of stuff we get nowadays," he thought. "There hasn't been time since prohibition started for the system to get trained to react to this TNT stuff, like it was to regular liquor. Maybe in ten years or in the next generation people's systems will have got adjusted to this kind of poison and it'll be all right with 'em." It's an interesting idea, I think.

A customer was requesting Ed to "fix him up" a pint flask. No, it couldn't be done just now, as the supply was running too low for it to be passed out that much at a time. The disappointed customer tried to content himself with endeavoring to absorb as much of a pint as he could obtain through a rapidly consumed series of single drinks. And pretty soon it was officially announced from the bar that there would be "no more until nine o'clock in the morning." I gathered that the reserve stock was upstairs or downstairs and that the "old man" had gone away with the key.

We went forth to take a walk, Pete accompanying us as a sort of cicerone, and discoursing with much erudition of bar-rooms as we went. "These places are getting scarce," he observed. "There don't seem to be any, or there seems to

be hardly any of the old places uptown," I remarked. "Oh! no; not in residential neighborhoods," he replied; and I inferred that the law was, in deference to the innocent spirit of domesticity, keener-eyed there. "And there ain't but very few below the dead-line downtown," Pete said.

They have, the bars, very largely disappeared from Broadway. Have been gone from that thoroughfare for some time. And in this thought we come upon one of the great mockeries of the situation which has existed since the Eighteenth Amendment went (more or less) into effect. What I mean is this: A great many people who had no ferocious opposition to the idea of a cocktail being drunk before a meal, or wine with it, or even a liqueur after it, did detest the saloon. It was the institution of the common, corner saloon, I fancy, at which the bulk of American temperance sentiment was directed.

The perverse operation of prohibition then was this: It ceased to be possible (openly) to obtain any alcoholic beverage in anything like wholesome surroundings, in a first-class restaurant or hotel or in a gentleman's club. But in New York City, as is known to everybody who knows any-

thing at all about the matter, the saloons, and particularly the lower class of saloons, have flourished as never before.

As we crossed Broadway Pete pointed out one place which had been going until a short time ago, an odious looking place (as I remember it) within. It was but a short way from a club of distinguished membership. So much had this doggery become frequented by these gentlemen that it became jocularly known among them as the "club annex."

Continuing on over into the West Side, here was a place, now a shop dealing in raincoats, but formerly a "gin-mill" where throughout this last winter there had been an extraordinary infusion of Bacardi rum, drunk neat, as their favorite drink, by its multitudinous customers. And there was a place, a baby carriage exhibited for sale in its window now, which as a saloon had burned out one night not long ago; when its proprietor accepted the catastrophe with striking cheerfulness, withdrew his business activities to his nearby apartment and took up calling upon old customers by appointment. Innumerable the places over which Pete breathed a sigh, which had lately turned into tobacco stores or candy shops.

We turned in at a door on Sixth Avenue. A little more caution seemed to be observed here than at the place we had just left. But Pete, of course, would pass any scrutiny. The liquor bottle, you noted, stood within the safe at the inner end of the bar, its door hanging ready at any moment to be kicked to. The barman covered with his hand the little glasses he set out until you took them, and admonished, "Get away with it!" The drinks were eighty cents a throw, but they had the feel of genuine good-grade rye.

Night had fallen. We passed into the back room, where a pathetic object was banging dismal tunes on a rattle-trap of a piano. A party of four entered. The young women were very young and decidedly attractive. The two couples began to circle about in a dance. Next moment came a terrific thundering on the front of the building. "Cop wants less noise," said the waiter to the dancers; "you'll have to quit." "Throw that into you," he said to the seated customer he was serving, and directly whisked away the glasses.

"When I go back home," said my friend from the Middle West, "and tell them about this they won't believe it."

CHAPTER XXVII

NOSING 'ROUND WASHINGTON

I

I CAME very near to being shot in the White House grounds the other day. Yep! You see, my friend is a bit on the order of what the modistes call "stylish stout." Rather more than a bit, indeed. Looks something like a slightly youthfuller Irvin Cobb. Also wouldn't consider it decent of him out of doors not to "wear" his stag-handled cane. Altogether, not unlikely to be taken for a real somebody. He was fishing round in his breast pocket for the letter his senator from "back home" had given him to the President's secretary. Drew out what may have seemed an important looking document.

As we came along the path toward the executive offices there was an up-stage looking bunch thronging about the little steps—rollicking gamins, smartly turned out flappers, a sprinkling of rather rakish looking young males, and (in

their best black silk) a populous representation of those highly honorable and very ample figures who have generously mothered the young sons and daughters of the American prairies.

Suddenly from the side lines they popped out —a whole battery of them, with their bug-like machines on tall stilts. The motion picture camera men were taking no chances that anything important would escape their fire. Evidently they couldn't quite place us, however, so we got through the door without further incident.

When we had entered the grounds through the gate at the far side of the lawn my thoughtful friend had thrown away his lighted cigar, feeling that promiscuous smoking here would be taboo from danger of fire to so precious a national jewel as the White House. Within the anteroom to the executive offices the scene very decidedly suggested one of those jovial masculine gatherings termed a "smoker." The seething and motley company of (obviously) newspaper men put one in mind of the recent arrival at a military training camp of a nondescript batch of drafted men not yet got into uniform. General air about the room of loafing in a corner cigar store.

Then, suddenly, a rising murmur and a pell-mell push toward the door. My friend and I were swayed out upon the step, and saw at the gate directly at the street corner of the building the movie camera men very vigorously clearing for action. They had halted close before them a tall, striking and very distinguished figure. You instantly recognized him by the insignia which he wore on the slope toward his chin of his under lip—a wisp of whisker (light straw color) such as decorated the illustrious countenance, too, of the late James Abbott McNeil Whistler.

He was, this gentleman, looking very sheepish, continually bowing in a rather strained manner to the camera men and lifting his black derby hat to them. They were scrambling about the legs of their engines and cranking away with a rattle. "Over this way a little, Mr. Paderewski!" yelled one. "Hold on, Mr. Paderewski, there you are!" bawled another. Boisterous mirth about the doorway . . . "That's good!" "Sure, he's only a premier."

Then, a deferential scattering to make way for him as he approached. Held him up again, the camera guerrillas, on the steps. He was bowing

with an effect of increasing strain and the intensity of his sheepishness becoming painful to contemplate. His hair a white bush thrusting out behind. Ghostly white bow tie. His black clothes beautifully sleek and pressed. At close up, his features blunter, less sensitive in chiselling than appears in his photographs. The flesh of his face striking in the degree of the pinkness and fairness of complexion of the races of Northern Europe.

My friend and I had not yet seen Mr. Christian. Had that morning called upon Mr. Tumulty on a matter of business. Found he had set up shop in a business structure called the Southern Building. Transom Legend: Law Offices . . . Joseph P. Tumulty. On entrance door: Joseph P. Tumulty, Charles H. Baker. Outstanding feature of ante-chamber a life-size cream plaster bust, on tall polished wood pedestal, of Woodrow Wilson. Mr. Tumulty, stocky of stature, driving in manner, bustled forth from his private office. Exhaled atmosphere of ruddiness.

My friend at times (I fear) speaks with some circumlocution. Our real business here settled, he was ambling on toward the expression of his

hope that we might possibly be able sometime, just for a moment, to see, just get a glimpse of . . .

"The President," Mr. Tumulty cut in, with an anticipating nod. My friend looked a bit confused as (I could see) the words "the ex-President" were about to come from him. But, undoubtedly, both of them meant the same gentleman.

In the executive offices we trailed along with the newspaper men for their daily afternoon interview with Mr. Christian, my friend bathing himself in tobacco smoke as complacently as anyone of the party. Entered a sort of council chamber. Long table down the middle. Conspicuous ornament of the apartment, on a mantel, a plaster cast of a humorous Uncle Sam in a dress coat, holding aloft an American flag, and flanked by a turkeyfied looking eagle.

Congregation pressed close about the table, behind which in a swivel chair sat in a relaxed and rather pensive attitude an angular figure, swinging leisurely looking legs which terminated in very white sox and low-cut shoes. A rather thick thatch of greying hair, large aquiline features, a rather melancholy cast of expression,

eyes cast downward at the table, clothes not recently pressed and which no one would be inclined to call dapper, Mr. Christian in general effect suggested a good deal one's impression of a somewhat dusty "reference librarian" at the information desk of the New York Public Library being besieged by an unusually large number of questioners.

"Well, gentlemen," he uttered very quietly and slowly, "what have you got on your mind?"

"George," asked a figure with pad and pencil in hand, "what about this?" Mr. Christian appeared to ponder the matter a good while, and the upshot of his cogitation appeared to be that there wasn't much of anything about it. "And what is there to that?" inquired aonther. Well at length there didn't seem to be much to that either. A few items of information were given. And the audience briefly closed.

When we had filed out with the company from the room my friend and I took seats in the corridor. He had given his letter to the doorman. A couple of soldiers in uniform, a group of very spruce, robust and cheery-looking Catholic priests, an elderly individual of very dejected pose, and a miscellaneous assortment of human-

ity also were waiting. The doorman was being continually accosted. "Just want to shake hands with him, that's all," and "Just want to say 'How de do'," were solicitations frequently overheard.

The doorman beckoned to us and told us to go into an apartment which he indicated and "take a seat." Probably my friend didn't hear that instruction, as he marched straight up to Mr. Christian directly upon entering the room flooded with afternoon light pouring through an imposing row of tall and beautiful windows. Mr. Christian slowly arose from his desk, coming gradually to his full height, and yielded a cautious hand to my friend. He looked at the bright and somewhat flustered countenance of my friend rather sadly, as it seemed. Though at some sally of my friend's about the pronunciation of his name he smiled with considerable natural human warmth. Then very gravely he stated that with so many appointments at present to be made, and with the multitudinous labors now upon him, and so forth and so on, it was hardly possible that he could just now arrange for my friend to have a word with, as he said. . . . "the Senator."

My friend was, obviously, a bit taken aback

by the term, as his mind had been careering along with visions of his seeing no less a person than the President. But there was no doubt that both he and Mr. Christian were referring to the same gentleman.

I should add that my friend's self-imposed mission of shaking hands with Mr. Harding and writing an article about his impressions of him before the President had yet given an audience to the accredited representatives of the press was more or less audacious. And I should add still further that Mr. Christian seemed genuinely reluctant to dismiss my friend without a ray of hope, and suggested that he call again after a few days. Suggestion was at Mr. Christian's own volition.

As we turned to leave the room we saw that the bevy of Catholic Fathers and several other persons had also been admitted, and were all beaming with bland cheerful confidence.

We strolled along the driveway leading by the front entrance to the White House. The baggy looking policeman lazily sunning himself beside the portico recalled to my mind with amusing contrast the snappy Redcoats who briskly pace back and forth before Buckingham Palace.

They are superbly haughty and disdainful beings. A charmingly democratic character, this policeman. "'At a fierce cloud over there," he observed to us as we paused nearby.

A splendid looking army officer together with a caped naval commander emerged with springy step from the White House door, both carrying an air of high elation. A sumptuous car rolled up and halted beneath the portico roof extending over the driveway. From it a lady leaned out extending a card. Out pranced a gleaming negro flunky to receive it with bows of elaborate courtliness. As he turned to re-enter the White House it struck me that I did not believe I had ever seen a happier looking human being. Also, in his beautiful dark blue tail coat with bright silver buttons, and delicately striped light waistcoat, he brought to my mind (incongruously enough) the waiters at Keen's Chop House. The lady rolled on.

A bumptious looking character mounted to the entrance, and sent in a card. It was evident in his bearing that he expected within a moment to stride through the doorway. A figure in a skirt coat emerged. Bumptious being springs upon him and begins to pump his hand up and

down with extraordinary verve, straining the while toward the doorway. Skirt coat (his hand continuing to be pumped) deferentially edges bumptious character outward toward descending steps.

It had been an exceedingly hot day for early spring. Traffic policemen had stood on their little platforms at the centre of the street crossings under those mammoth parasols they have to shield them from the rigors of the Washington sun. As we proceeded toward our exit from the grounds, approaching to the White House came a diminutive and decrepit figure muffled in an overcoat extending to his heels, bowed under a tall top hat, a pair of mighty ear-muffs clamped over his ears.

We had that morning visited the Capitol. My friend had been much more interested in the guide-conducted touring parties than in the atrocious painting of the Battle of Lake Erie, and so on, expatiated on to them. Parties which, he said, made him feel that he was back again at the Indiana State Fair. We had sat, in the visitors' gallery of the Senate, in the midst of a delegation of some sort of religious sect, whose beards had most decidedly the effect of false

whiskers very insecurely attached. Had been much struck by the extreme politeness of a new Senator who bowed deeply to each one in turn of a row of pages he passed before. Had responded within a few minutes to the command of "All out!" because of executive meeting, and sympathised with the sentiments of fellow citizens likewise ejected who went forth murmuring that they hadn't "got much."

We had wandered through the noble and immaculate Senate Office building, and been much impressed by the scarcity of spittoons there, an abundance of which articles of furniture we had since boyhood associated with all public buildings. We had sat in the outer office of our state's senator, and listened to one lady after another explain to his secretary in this wise: "I just made up my mind . . . I just decided to go right after it . . . I just determined . . . I just thought . . . Otherwise, of course, I shouldn't presume to ask it."

In the Library of Congress we had been much interested to hear an European gentleman of vast erudition connected with the Library declare that "there was more intellectual life in Washington than in any other city in America—that

it was an European city, in the best sense." We had been accosted on the street by a very portly and loud-voiced man who introduced himself by inquiring where we were from; who confided that his business in Washington had to do with an alcohol permit; and who asked to be directed to Corcoran Gallery. We had run into an old actor friend who was here playing, he said, "nut stuff"; and who observed that Washington was "more of a boob town than ever." We had been assured by a newspaper friend that Washington was so full of inventors and blue law fans that if you "dropped a match anywhere a nut would step on it."

We had been charmed by the vast number of elderly couples apparently on a final mellow honeymoon before the fall of the curtain. At lunch had overheard an inland matron inquire of a waitress if scollops were "nice." Had enjoyed hot corn bread with every meal. Had been unable to account for the appearance on the streets of so many wounded soldiers. Had made the mistake of getting up so early that in the deep Washington stillness of half past seven we were scared to run the water for our baths for fear of rousing the sleeping hotel to angry

tumult. Had noted that nowhere except in London is the fashion of freshly polished shoes so much an institution. Had speculated as to why the standard model of the American statesman's hat should be a blend of an expression of the personalities of W. J. Bryan, Buffalo Bill and Colonel Watterson.

And, finally, listening in the evening to the orchestra in the corridor of the New Willard, we discussed the large opportunities for a serious literary work dealing with the varieties and idiosyncrasies of the Washington hair cut. There is the Bryan type, with the hair turned outward in a thick roll above the back of the neck, and forming a neat hat rest. There is the roach back from a noble dome. There is the grey curly bushy all around. There is the heavy grey wave mounting high over one side. And—well, there seem to be an almost endless number of styles, all more or less peculiar to the spirit of Washington, and all of distinct distinction.

II

"Who's the old bird gettin' so many pictures took?" inquired a loitering passerby.

A hum of much good nature was coming from

the motley throng about the steps before the executive office of the White House. "Beer and light wine," called out someone, apparently in echo to something just said by the queer looking character being photographed by the battery of camera men, and a rattle of laughter went around through the group.

"That's old Coxey," replied someone. "He's down here to get Debs out," he added. The amiable and celebrated "General" who a number of years ago had led his "army" on to Washington was smiling like a very wrinkled and animated potato into the lenses of the cameras which had been moved to within a couple of feet or so of his nose.

My friend and I crossed the street to the State, Army and Navy building. We had been there the other day to see a young man in the State Department to whom he had a card. Had been much struck by his beauty.. And had wondered if handsomeness was a requisite for a statesman in this Administration.

Now we sought the press room. Presented our credentials to a press association man there. Cordial chap. Said, "Stick around." Others floated in. Pretty soon press association man

heartily calls out to my friend (whose name is Augustus), "George. Come on!" And we trail along with about fifty others into the antechamber of the new Secretary of the Navy, who at half past ten is to give his first interview to the newspaper men.

Funny looking corridors, by the way, in this building. Swing doors all about, constructed of horizontal slats, and in general effect bearing a picturesque resemblance to the doors of the old-time saloon.

I noticed that as we went along my friend punched in one side of the crown of his soft hat and raked it somewhat to one side of his head. He felt, I suspected, uncomfortably neat for the society of this bonhomie crowd of bona fide newspaper men, and did not wish to appear aloof by being too correct in attire.

The company passed along the corridor and into the anteroom under a heavy head of tobacco smoke. There the press association man presented each of the flock in turn to a chubby little fellow behind a railing, whom I took to be secretary to the Secretary; and presently the delegation was admitted to the inner office, a spacious apartment where one passed first an enormous

globe, then a large model of the *Old Kearsarge* in a glass case; and at length we ranged ourselves closely before a mountain of a man in a somewhat saggy suit. Clean shaven, massive features, very bald dome, widely smiling, Secretary Denby looks just a bit (I thought) like Mr. Punch. His voice comes in a deep rumble and he has entirely ample ears. Trousers too long.

No; he had not seen the story in that morning's paper which was handed to him by one of the reporters. He would not confirm this; he would not deny that. After all, he had been "only a week in the job." And one might so very easily be "injudicious." "Wily old boy," was one comment as the party trailed out and made for the press telephones, discussing among themselves "how would you interpret" this and that?

Next, at eleven o'clock, the Secretary of State was down on the newspaper men's schedule. We went into a kind of waiting room across the corridor from the real offices of the Secretary. Most conspicuous decoration a huge painting of a Bey of Tunis, the presentation of which (the inscription said) had something to do with condolences from France on the death of Lincoln.

Also on one wall a portrait of Daniel Webster.

Mr. Fletcher, Under Secretary of State, appeared before us. Very dapper gentleman. Athletic in build. Fashionable clothes. Grey hair but youthful in effect. Handsome, smooth-shaven face. Suggested an actor, or perhaps a very gentlemanly retired pugilist. Held beautiful shell spectacles in hand before him. Stood very straight. Had another fellow alongside of him to supply information when himself in doubt. When asked concerning someone who was in jail, inquired "Where is the old boy?" Smiling cordially, seeking continually for an opportunity for some joke or pleasantry, trying bravely to keep up a strong front, but obviously becoming more and more uneasy under the ordeal of rapid-fire questions about Russia, Germany, Japan and so on and so on. On being asked concerning diplomatic appointments under consideration, bowed briskly, replied "A great many," and escaped—almost, it might be said, fled.

Secretary of War next on the list. Full length portraits in his offices of Generals Pershing, Bliss and Petain. Many flags, historic ones (presumably) in glass cases. Heavy build, Secretary Weeks, very wide across the middle.

Straggling moustache, drooping. Very direct and business-like in manner. Entered room saying, "Well, there are a number of things I have to tell you gentlemen." Frank and positive in his statements and denials. Stood twisting a key-ring as he talked. Wore neat pin in tie. When told that the War Department was supposed to have such and such a thing under consideration, he replied, tapping himself on the breast, "Not this part of the War Department." One questioner sought to obtain from him a more direct reply to a question that had been put to the Secretary of the Navy. He answered, "I know nothing about the navy." When there was apparently nothing more that he had to say, he concluded the audience very deftly.

"He's a different guy, ain't he?" was one correspondent's observation as we passed out of the room. "One of the biggest men in the government," he added. "Gives the impression of knowing as much about that job now as Baker did when he left."

To the National Press Club we went for lunch. It is pleasant to see in what esteem this club holds those two eminent journalists, Eugene Field and Napoleon Bonaparte, whose portraits hang

framed side beside on one of its walls. Napoleon, however, is held in such very great regard as a newspaper man that another and larger picture of him hangs in another room.

The newspaper army had shifted to the business office of the White House. As we entered Secretary Weeks was departing. He pressed through the throng of reporters clustered about him. "Nothing to say," was apparently what he was saying. "We are referred to Warren," said one of the men. "Looks like we really were going to see him," said another. The President had not yet given an interview to the press men. So we took seats among the rows of figures ranged around the walls.

While waiting we were given an audience, so to say, by Laddie, the White House Airedale. Curly haired breed. "How old is he?" we asked the small colored boy whose office includes charge of him. "A year," he said. The dog stands well, and holds his stump of a tail straight aloft, correctly enough. But there is altogether too much black on him, we observed; covers his breast and flanks, instead of being merely a "saddle" on his back. "Yes, everybody says it," answered the boy.

Secretary Hughes was seen coming down the corridor on his way out. The newspaper men pressed forward forming a narrow line through which he walked, very erect, smiling broadly, bowing to right and left, and continually moving his black derby hat up and down before him. "Gets a great reception, don't he?" said one reporter, glowing with a sort of jovial pride at Mr. Hughes.

"You'll have to see the boss," Mr. Hughes repeated a number of times as he came along, and turning slightly made one last very good-natured bow as he moved out through the door.

"Are they all here?" called out Mr. Christian, then marshalled us through his office and into the large, circular and very handsome office of the President.

While we awaited him he could be seen, through a doorway, talking, on a porch-like structure opening out along the back of the building. He was very leisurely in manner. I think my first outstanding impression of my glimpse of him was that he was a very handsome man, most beautifully dressed in a dark blue serge sack suit, very sharply pressed.

He came in, moving slowly, stood close behind

his desk, and said, "Well, gentlemen, what is there that I can tell you?" He spoke very quietly and deliberately. The Cabinet he said had discussed problems relating to the "hang-over" (as he put it) of the War, in particular the trade situation of the world. He mentioned that he did not desire to be quoted directly. He had not been "annoyed" but he had been "distressed," he said, by having been so quoted not long ago. The top button of his coat was buttoned. His cuffs were stiffly starched. He inclined his head a good part of the time to one side. Sometimes half closed his eyelids. Then would open them very wide, and make an outward gesture with his hands, accompanied by something like a shrug of the shoulders. Close up I was struck by the bushiness of his eyebrows. He wore a single ring, mounting a rather large light stone. No pin to his tie. He swung backward and forward on his feet. Put on shell-rimmed nose glasses to read. Sometimes pursed his lips slowly. As he talked absently rolled a small piece of paper he had picked up from his desk into the shape of a cigarette. His talk had a slightly oratorical roll. He was exceedingly patient and exceedingly courteous. His general

atmosphere was one of deep kindness. In conclusion he said, "Glad to see you again."

"That's pretty nice," was the comment of one of the newspaper men as we emerged from his presence.

As we moved away through the grounds my friend dilated on a somewhat whimsical idea of his. This was to this effect. In motion picture plays (my friend insisted) kings were always much more kingly in appearance and manner than any modern king would be likely to be. But (he declared) it would be very difficult for a motion picture concern to get hold of any actor to play the part who would look so much like an American President as President Harding.

We stopped in to look at the east room, now again open. A character who had evidently not been born in any of the capitols of Europe was admiring the place vastly. He looked with especial approval at the enormous chandeliers, those great showers, or regular storms, of glass. "Pretty hard to beat," was his patriotic comment.

III

It's a big old building, dark inside, the Washington Post Office. He looked like some sort of

a guard about the premises who was too tired to stand up and so did his guarding sitting in a chair. My friend had got so accustomed to inquiring our way to the office of Secretary Hughes, and of Secretary Weeks, and so on, that he asked where we would find Secretary Hays.

The man looked at us very contemptuously. "The Postmaster General?" at length he boomed. Well, he was on the fifth floor. As we stepped from the car my friend remarked on the practice universal in Washington of men removing their hats when in the presence of women in elevators.

Our appointment was for ten o'clock. We had got quite used, however, to waiting an hour or so for the gentlemen we sought to see. Several other callers were ahead of us here, and we sat down in the outer office when we had presented our cards to a very kind and attentive young man who appeared to be in charge.

Within a very few minutes, however, we were ushered round into a secluded inner office. "The General," the young man said, "will be in in a moment. He sees them in two different rooms

at the same time." This large room was entirely bare of painting or other decorations.

Speaking of decorations reminds me of the striking handsomeness of the Cabinet officers we had so far been seeing. Beginning with the President himself (prize winner of the lot in this respect) the spectacle of this Administration had up to this moment been a regular beauty show.

The physiognomy of Mr. Hays, of course, strikes a somewhat different note in the picture. Though he is not, I should say, as funny looking as some of his pictures suggest.

He fairly leaped into the room. Spidery figure. Calls you by your last name without the prefix of Mister. Very, very earnest in effect. No questions necessary to get him started. He began at once to talk. Poured forth a steady stream of rapid utterance. Denounced the idea of labor as a "commodity." Said: "We have a big job here. Three hundred thousand employees. Millions of customers. I think we can do it all right, though. But our people in the department all over the country everywhere must be made to feel that a human spirit is behind them. It's in the heart that the battle's won. It's because of the spirit behind them whether

our men throw a letter on the floor before a door or put it through the door." Made a gesture with his hands illustrating putting a letter through a door. Looked very hard at the very clean top of his desk much of the time as he talked. Now and then looked very straight indeed at us. Gave us a generous amount of his time. At length arose very briskly.

Routed us out around through some side way. Had a private elevator concealed somewhere in a dark corner. Turned us over to the colored man in charge of it with the request, "Won't you please take my friends down?"

As we were crossing the street we ran into our old friend from New York who edits a very flourishing women's magazine. Down here, he said, to get an article from Mrs. Harding. Had found her altogether willing to supply him with an article, but in so much of a flutter with her new activities that she didn't see her way to finding time soon to write it. What, we asked, was the article to be about? Well, Mrs. Harding's idea was to revive all the old traditions of the White House. And what were those traditions? Mrs. Harding hadn't said beyond the custom of Easter egg-rolling.

NOSING 'ROUND WASHINGTON

We were on our way over to see Assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt. He is not in the State, Army and Navy building where Mr. Denby is, but some ten minutes' walk away, in the long, rather fragile looking Navy Department building constructed during the War.

Here numerous gold-braided officers continually come and go. The building is filled with very beautiful models of fighting ships. At one side of Roosevelt's door is a model of the *San Diego,* at the other side a "sample U. S. Navy Patrol Boat."

As we gave him our cards a young man asked us if we knew "the Colonel." An old Washington newspaper man had told us that morning, "He will go far under his own hat." Several very large men, also waiting, were smoking very large cigars while we waited. While all male visitors to public offices in Washington appear to smoke continually, those in government positions apparently do not smoke during office hours. And government business hours there seem to be queer. The Senate goes into session at just about lunch time. The President seems to be around in his business office throughout the whole of the middle of the day. And the office of the Secretary

of State telephones you at six o'clock Saturday night.

The young man showed us in. Mr. Roosevelt arose from his desk, shook hands very cordially, said "How do you do?" sat down again and at the moment said nothing further. It was up to us to swing the conversation. So my friend launched out: We had nothing to do with affairs of state, had no design to interview him as to naval matters, simply were curious to see if we should find him eating an apple and wearing white sox, or what. With hearty good nature, Mr. Roosevelt replied that he was not eating an apple because he did not have one to eat, and that he had only once worn white sox, woolen ones, when a boy at school.

He was very neatly dressed in a suit of quiet dark material, wore rich dark red tie, with a stick pin to it. Curiously weather beaten looking complexion. As he has just published a book we asked him if he intended to carry on more or less of a literary career together with his public life. He said, well, perhaps more or less. But he wouldn't have time for much such work. He "practised" writing on Saturdays and Sundays, but mainly for the purpose of attaining to clear-

ness in expressing himself. He insisted that the great bulk of his father's writing had been done *before* the full course of his political activities and *after* he had retired from them.

After we had arisen to go he walked up and down the room with us, with a somewhat arm-in-arm effect. Declared we should know a friend of his up in Boston, because we'd "like him." Said to look in on him again any time when in Washington. Very affable young man.

We went out on S Street to see Wilson's new house. Handsome enough structure, but, undetached from the building next door and fronting directly on the sidewalk, we decided that it looked somewhat more like a club than like a private residence. Were told later that the part of that house to look at is the back of it, as there are wonderful gardens there.

One cannot fail to note in the numerous art shops where pictures of Harding, Roosevelt, Washington, Lincoln and Cleveland are displayed in abundance the relative absence of pictures of Wilson.

Why do august statesmen in the lobby of the New Willard cross their legs so that we can see that their shoes need to be half-soled? Why do

so many distinguished looking gentlemen in Washington wear their overcoats as though they were sleeveless capes? What on earth do so many Oklahoma looking characters do in Washington? Why is it that there the masses do not, as in New York and Chicago and Los Angeles, stroll about at night?

We stopped in again at the executive office of the White House. Remarkable number of doormen there got up somewhat like policemen, so that you repeatedly have to explain yourself all over again. Man new to us on today. Suspiciously asked our names. Then (though what just our names could have meant to him I cannot see) shook hands with immense friendliness, and told us his name.

Quite a throng waiting. Busy hum all about. Different crowd from usual. Hardly any reporters. Old gentlemen. Stout red-faced fellows with large black slouch hats. Several youngish women with very generous bosom displays. Some sort of a delegation, apparently. We did not make out just what. But the scene somewhat suggested a meeting of the Los Angeles branch of the Ohio Society. At length

the company lines up. We trail in through with the rest.

The President, looming in the centre of his office, shakes hands with each caller in turn, in a manner of paternal affection. Holds your hand very gently within his for a considerable while. Rather odd position he takes when shaking hands. Right shoulder lifted. Looks (though I felt that he was unconscious of this effect) somewhat like a pose that a painter might put his model into when about to paint him shaking hands.

He bent over us in a very fatherly fashion. Said, yes, yes, he had got our letters while in the South. Which was quite a mistake, as we hadn't written him any letters. But his kindly intention was quite unmistakable.

IV

Senator New's secretary, in his room on the second floor of the Senate Office building, was opening a wooden box that had come by mail. No; he wasn't exactly opening this box, either. He was looking at it suspiciously and cautiously tipping it from side to side. "Feels like it was a snake," he said fearsomely. "Soft, live-like

weight in there. I don't believe I'll open it. You see," indicating the stamps, "it's from India, too."

"But why would anybody be sending Senator New a snake?" inquired my friend.

"Goodness gracious! We get lots of things just as queer as snakes," replied Mr. Winter. "I guess the Senator must be coming in pretty soon," he remarked, glancing about. "So many people coming in," he added, and continued: "It's a remarkable thing. Visitors seem to have some sort of psychic knowledge of when the Senator will be in. Same way out in Indianapolis, we could always tell when Tom Taggart was likely to be back soon from French Lick—so many people (who couldn't have heard from him) looking for him at the Denizen House."

"Everybody," someone observed, "always comes to Washington at least once a year." All United-Statesians, at any rate, one would say looking about the city, probably do. And among visiting United-Statesians not habitually seen in such profusion elsewhere one would certainly include, Indians, Mormons, Porto-Ricans, Civil War veterans, pedagogues, octogenarians, vegetarians, Virginians, creoles, pastors, suffragettes,

honeymooners, aunts, portly ladies of peculiar outline, people of a very simple past, and a remarkable number of gentlemen who still cling to white "lawn" ties, hard boiled shirts and "Congress shoes."

Also, of course, that vast congregation of people who "want" something in Washington. "What are you looking for around here?" a remark commonly overheard in the hotel lobbies.

But there are other American cities to which "everybody" goes, too, now or then, though the visitors are not perhaps so recognizable. Coming out of the Capitol, passing through the grounds of the White House, what do you frequently overhear? Frequently some such remark as this: "Haven't you ever been in the subway? To the Bronx? When you go back you certainly must go in it."

And out in Los Angeles they boastfully tell you that one way in which Los Angeles "is like New York" is this: That whereas a man may or may not happen to go to Richmond or to Detroit, sooner or later you are bound to see him on the streets of Los Angeles. That, as I say, is what they tell you out there.

But what are those aspects of Washington

which are peculiar to that city, and make it so unlike any other city in the United States? And which in some cases make it an influence for the bad to many of its visitors? And which in some cases it is so strange should be the aspect of such a city?

For one thing, the first thing which must strike any stranger to the city is the enormous extent of the souvenir business there. It is perhaps natural enough that this should be so, and that souvenir shops should range themselves in an almost unbroken stretch for miles. What is not altogether so easy to answer is why nearly all of the souvenirs should be the kind of souvenirs they are.

Printed portraits of the present President and of former Presidents, and plaster busts of these personages, of course. That many of the articles for "remembrance" should be touched with a patriotic design, of course, too. But why today should so many millions of the "souvenir spoons" (with the Capitol in relief on the bowl), the "hand painted" plates (presenting a comic valentine likeness of George Washington), the paper-weights (with a delirious lithograph of the Library of Congress showing through), the

"napkin rings," butter knives, and so on and so on—why should such millions of these things be precisely in the style of such articles proudly displayed in the home of my grandmother when I was a boy in the Middle West?

Outside of Washington, as far as I know in the world, any considerable exhibition of wares so reminiscent of the taste of the past can only be found along the water fronts of a city where men of ships shop. And there, along water fronts, you always find that same idea of ornament.

Another thing. Where in Washington are shops where real art is sold—paintings of reputable character and rare specimens of antique furniture? They may be there; I do not swear that they are not, but they are remarkably difficult to find.

Painting reminds me. The Corcoran Gallery is, of course, a justly famous museum of art. But a minor museum, containing no Old Masters, but an excellent collection of American painting, particularly excellent in its representation of the period immediately preceding the present, the period of the men called our impressionist painters. Its best canvas, I should say, is the

painting by John H. Twachtman, called (I believe) "The Waterfall." My point is, that visitors there certainly are seeing what they are supposed to be seeing there—art.

What I am coming to (and I do not know why someone does not come to it oftener) is this: That hordes of people who come to Washington will look at with wonder as something fine anything which is shown to them. The numerous beautiful works of architecture—to which is now added the very noble Lincoln Memorial—they see, and probably derive something from. But the cultural benefits of their visits to their Mecca of patriotic interest must be weirdly distorted when they are led gaping through the Capitol and are charged twenty-five cents apiece to be told by a guard who knows as much about paintings as an ashman a quantity of imbecile facts about prodigious canvases atrociously bad almost beyond belief.

The Embarkation of the Pilgrims and Washington Resigning his Commission, and so forth, indisputably are historic moments for the American breast to recall with solemn emotion. And the iniquity of these paintings here to minds uninstructed in works of art is that by reason of

their appeal to sentiments of love of country these nightmares of ugliness are put over on the visitor as standards of beauty.

Still speaking (after a fashion) of "art," another aspect of Washington hits the eye. And that is the extremely moral note here. In Los Angeles (that other nation's playground of holiday makers) perhaps even more picture cards are displayed for sale. A very merry lot of pictures, those out there—all of "California bathing girls" and very lightly veiled figures, limbs rythmically flashing in "Greek dances." Such picture cards of gaiety of course may be found in windows here and there on some streets in New York and other cities. But after much window gazing I fancy that anybody bent upon buying such things in Washington would have to get them from a bootlegger or someone like that.

And whereas, as I recall, in other centres of urban life, and especially on the Pacific Coast, the photographers' exhibits run very largely to feminine beauty and fashion, in photographers' windows in Washington, you will note, masculine greatness dominates the scene.

Speaking of photographers and such-like sug-

gests another thing. Let us come at the matter in this way. A good many women of culture and means, I understand, choose to live in Washington; probably in large measure because the city is beautifully laid out, because it is a pleasant size, because there are no factories and subways there, and so on. We know that numerous retired statesmen prefer to remain there. There is society of the embassies. In consideration of all this, and in consideration further of the comparatively large leisure there for an American city, you would suppose that, behind the transient population, in Washington, a highly civilized life went on. Very well.

True, they have the third greatest reference library in the world and the numerous scholars associated with it. But where do the people *buy* their books? One bookstore of fair size. Another good but quite small. A third dealing mainly in second-hand volumes. Not one shop devoted to sets in fine bindings, first editions, rare items and such things. Though in Philadelphia, for instance, there is one of the finest (if not the finest) bookshops dealing in rare books anywhere in the world. In San Francisco

numerous bookstores. Larger cities? Yes (as to that part of it), of course.

But it does seem queer that not a single newspaper in Washington runs book reviews or prints any degree at all of literary comment.

Alluding to San Francisco, that happy dale of the *bon-vivant,* how does he who likes good living make out in Washington, unless he lives in a club, an embassy, or at the White House? A grand public market, two first-class hotel dining-rooms, and many fine homes. But an earnest seeker after eating as a fine art could find tucked away none of those chop-houses and restaurants to dine in which enlarge the soul of man.

But, of course, perhaps you can't have everything at once. From the visitors' gallery the spectacle of the Senate in active session is a game more national than baseball. "There he goes!" cries one ardent spectator, pointing to a "home player," so to say, moving down the aisle. "That's him! Gettin' along pretty good, ain't he?"

CHAPTER XXVIII

FAME: A STORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

$10,000!

IN PRIZES FOR SHORT STORIES!

You have a story. We want to read it. Every human life has one great story in it. Every man, every woman, has at least one story to tell.

THIS MEANS YOU!

From your experience, from your own heart history, you can draw a tale. You may not know that you can write. But you never know what you can do until you try. We believe there are thousands of unwritten little masterpieces, waiting only for the right encouragement to be produced. Here is our offer——

BENJAMIN KEYES drew a long breath. "This means you"—there was no doubt about that. These printed words had read his heart. He felt that deep was answering unto deep.

A brief résumé of his life passed through Keyes's mind. And he was touched, as never before, by the romance of destiny. He had not

contrived to be called up to public charges or employments of dignity or power in the world. When Ol' Necessity had tapped him on the shoulder he had cut his scholastic pursuits short of college, and a family friend, Dr. Nevens, had got him a fifth-rate job in a third-rate business concern. Here it seemed extremely probable that he would spend a good many of his days. By the continued exercise of steadiness of character, diligence, and application, he might hope, as Dr. Nevens by way of encouragement occasionally pointed out, to advance at the rate of a couple of dollars or so every couple of years. Clerkdom hedged him about as divinity doth a king.

The city directory rated him, "B. C. Keyes, Clerk." Should he be killed in a railway accident, chosen as a juror, or arrested for homicide, the newspapers would report that B. C. Keyes, a clerk, of 1120 Meredith Street,—etc. There was, he felt when he looked at it fairly, no way out. In the "Americans of Today" magazine articles, men rise from bootblacks to multi-millionaires, but these legends, Keyes felt numbly, had about as much relation to his own life as the hero tales of ancient Greece. His lot was cast in the bottom of a well

And yet,—Keyes had been considered a bright youngster at school; he regarded himself as a rather bright young man now; and sometimes even yet, in wayward, impractical moments, he saw in his mind a picture of himself breaking away from the field (so to say) and coming rounding into the home stretch to bear down on a grandstand wild with applause. He bore about within him a subconscious premonition, as it were, which apparently would not die, that something remarkable was to happen to him sooner or later. An unpleasant circumstance was that it was getting later now all the time. Still the estimate of his worth returned to him by life did not rid him of the belief that he had been originally intended by his Maker for higher things than he had found.

When, occasionally, the gloomy contrast of his life as it was with his career as he conceived it had been meant to be depressed him too untowardly, a young lady whom Keyes called Louise would administer spiritual stimulants.

Louise was a very clever person, and she knew a superior young man when she saw one. She did not care for your common men at all. She was intellectual. She read everything, her

friends said. She often told Keyes that he ought to write. She knew, she declared, that he could write better than most of the people who did write.

This idea of writing had, now and then, occurred to Keyes himself. He was rather fond, in his odd hours, of reading periodical fiction, which he liked to discuss with serious people like Louise. Sometimes with the exhilaration occasioned by the reading of a particularly good story, a romantic impulse to express himself welled up in him, and then evaporated. Generally in these instances he wanted to write a kind of story he had just read. He felt the glamour of the life of adventurous tales. He thrilled in response to the note struck in that sort of romance best exemplified, perhaps, in one of his favorites, "The Man Who Would Be King." Or he longed to be like O. Henry, wise with the wisdom of the Town. But there was one sort of story which always ignited in his mind the thought that he really did know a story of his own. This he sometimes positively yearned to tell. This the advertisement had put its finger upon. "Every human life has one great story in it." It was even so. "From your own heart history . . ."—Benja-

min Keyes felt that emotion which is the conception of a work of art.

* * * * * * *

He was pregnant with his idea. He rose from his bed betimes. He breathed a strangely fragrant air. He looked at the beautiful world. He wrote. He mentioned his little employment to no one: he felt rather ashamed of it, in fact; but it infatuated him. He encountered some awful tough spots, and at times he almost despaired—but he could not give up. Something within him, which he himself was conscious he did not understand, tortured him to go on. All day long, while at his business, his meals, his shaving, his story turned and twisted and talked in the back of his head. Despair alternated with exultation. At hours there came a gusto to his work; words that he had heard or read, forgotten and never used, came back to him from heaven knows where, and sprang to his pen at the felicitous instance. He felt that his mind was more alert than he remembered it to have ever been; he felt that his eyes were brighter; his hands, his whole right arm, felt strong. He knew as he worked that this was character, and this was sentiment,

and this was humor. He was shaken by the respiration of a heady drama. He felt that this—was almost genius! And he was aghast that he had lived such a dull life hitherto when this capacity had been in him.

He possessed little theoretic knowledge of writing; his story grew naturally, like a tree: he was intelligent, and he had a story to tell which must be told. In the matter of technical construction he followed in a general way, intuitively, unconsciously for the most part, without elaborate examination, the form of a short story as he was acquainted with it through his reading of stories. He wandered alone at night, oblivious of anything else, thinking, thinking his story over; and he felt good in his brain and in his heart and in his stomach. He felt virile, elated, full of power, and strangely happy. The joy of creating a thing of art was upon him. Thrills ran down his spine and into his legs; he would grin to himself in the dark streets; and sometimes he laughed aloud. Everything else he neglected. He could not even read the newspapers; he stayed at home two days from business; he worked early and late, and walked up and down, throbbing, meantimes.

The story was almost finished. The story *was finished.* What would Louise say? Would she think that he ought not to have written, ought not to make public, so intimate a history? Then in the story he had carried things further than they were in fact: the artistic instinct had formally plighted the lovers' troth. He thought of submitting his manuscript without showing it to Louise. Would it not be fine for her to discover the story in print! But Keyes had to read that story to someone or blow up.

* * * * * * *

His evening with Louise began awkwardly. The pleasant interchange of being did not, as usually so happily it did with Louise, flow naturally along. Keyes was accustomed to feel that with Louise he talked better than before anyone else. He now and then wished that certain other people, upon whom he felt he had not made so favorable an impression as he deserved, could overhear him sometime with Louise. Now, curiously, with her he felt as he had with them: he could not somehow get his real machinery started. Three or four times he determined to embark upon the subject in his mind, and as many times

the rising fulness in his chest and the sudden quivering of his heart daunted him. As he looked now at Louise, sitting there before him, the dignity of her as a young woman struck him, and it occurred to him as extraordinary that he could have been so intimate with her. He about concluded to put off his story until another time, at which immediately he felt much relieved.

His gaze wandered about among the familiar objects of the little parlor—the ordinary articles of the family furniture, the photographs on the mantel, the hand-painted plate on the wall,—then rested upon the framed Maxfield Parrish, which Keyes knew, with a glow of pride, to express the superior refinement of Louise's own taste. Keyes shared Louise's interest in art; he knew, and very much admired, the work of Dulac, James Montgomery Flagg, N. C. Wyeth, Arthur Keller, and many others; this was one of the fascinating bonds which united them, in division from a frivolous, material, and unsympathetic world. He glanced again now at the sumptuous Rackham book on the table, which it had been such a delight to him to give her at Christmas; and the revived discussion of æsthetics led him fairly comfortably into the subject of his

own entrance into work in that field. His manuscript came out of his pocket; and, straightening up on the edge of his chair, a little nervous again in the still pause that ensued, he cleared his throat, and, in a rather diffident voice, began to read. As he proceeded and knew that his effort found favor, his want of confidence left him. He fell into the swing and color of his work; and the heart of it he tasted like fine wine as he read. In the more moving passages his voice shook a trifle, and tears very nearly came into his eyes; it was all, he felt, so beautiful. When he had concluded there was in Louise's eyes—as he looked up, and saw her sitting, leaning forward with her chin on the back of her hand, her elbow on her knee,—a strange light. It occurred to Keyes that he did not remember ever to have seen a woman's face look exactly that way before. Probably not. This was a light some men never find on land or sea. It does not shine for any man more than once or twice. They sat awhile, these two in the little parlor, and happiness roared through their veins. Louise told Keyes that she had always known that he "had it in him."

Then they arose, and they were near to each

other, and their hearts were filled, and beneath the chandelier he moved his arms about her. His lips clasped hers. It was thus as it was in the story.

Keyes emerged from the brightly lighted doorway with Louise beaming tenderly after him. In his blissful abstraction of mind he neglected, on the dark porchway, to turn the corner of the house to the steps; but walked instead, straight ahead, until the world gave way beneath him, and he collapsed with a crash among the young vines.

The next week Louise, who held a position in the "Nickel's Weekly" Circulation Branch office in the Middle West, neatly typed the manuscript on one of the firm's machines. One evening they went together to post the story. . . . The ancient, imperturbable moon observed this momentous deed.

* * * * * * *

When Keyes put that manuscript into the mail box, he *knew* that it would be accepted. He felt this in his bones. He felt it in the soles of his feet and in the hair on his head.

For several days succeeding, a sensuous com-

placency pervaded young Keyes. In a rich haze he saw himself acclaimed, famous, adored. His nature was ardent, and he had always craved the warmth of approbation; but he had not had it, except from Louise. Now there were moments when, in a picture in his mind, he saw an attractive figure, which he recognized as himself somewhat altered, come jauntily along, amiably smiling, swinging a cane. He had always secretly desired very much to carry a cane, but he had felt uncomfortably that the humbleness of his position in life would make this ridiculous. In his moments of ambition he had hoped, sometimes, that walking-sticks would not go out (to put it so) before he came in. In the background of his mental picture Keyes recognized among the doting multitude the faces of about all of his acquaintances, some brought for the occasion from rather remote places.

Keyes felt a slight wrench of conscience in winking at this poetic liberty taken with realistic probability. When a name occurred to him the physiognomy of whose person was absent, Keyes's sense of probity was smothered, with a slight twinge of pain, by the ardor of his imagination; and place in the press was found for this

person, very kindly well up in front, where a good view could be had by him of the celebrity—at this point the celebrity in the delectable vision was observed gaily to light a cigarette. Discernible in the throng, too, were some few whose mean and envious natures writhed, the psychologist in Keyes perceived, at this handsome recognition of the worth of a young man it had once been their wont to snub.

In this balmy temper of mind Keyes got down to business one morning a little late. The humdrum of a business life had begun to be somewhat more irksome than hitherto to Keyes's swelling spirit. He ruminated this morning, as he stood before his tall stool at his ledger, on the curious ill-adjustment of a universe so arranged that one of his capacity for finer things could remain so unsuspected of the world about him, and the rich value of his life to some unmeaning task-work be allowed to give. A sudden electric buzzing beneath his high desk signalled him that his presence was desired by his chief. "What now?" he thought, a little tremulously and a little irritably, as he went: he had been caught up on several slips lately. He paused respectfully in the private office doorway. Mr. Winder, from his

swivel-chair, flashed up his white moustache very straight at Keyes. "Sit down," he directed. The suavity which was his habit was quite absent. Keyes felt the presence in the air of a good deal of masculine firmness.

"This," said Mr. Winder, his eye steadily on Keyes, "is a place of business. It is not a gentleman's club. Now, I want you to take a brace. That will do."

As Keyes took up his pen again and began to write, "By merchandise," his breast was full with resentment: a sense of the real integrity of his nature welled up in him. His mind rapidly generated the divers manly replies he wished, with an intensity amounting to pain, he had thought of a moment before. He saw himself, now exasperatingly too late, saying with frank honesty to Mr. Winder:

"I realize that I have of late been a little delinquent. But (with some eloquence) it has always been my intention to be, and I believe in the main I have been, a faithful and conscientious employee. I shall not be found wanting again."

But here he was a rebuked culprit. He felt the degradation of servitude. He experienced sharply that violent yearning so familiar to all

that are employed everywhere, to be able to go in and tell Mr. Winder to go to the devil. And though he felt at bottom the legitimacy, in the business ethic, of Mr. Winder's attitude, he also felt forlornly the coldness of the business relation, the brutal authority of worldly power, and its conception of his insignificance. And he was stung at the moral criminality, as he felt it to be, of a situation which placed such a man as Mr. Winder over such a nature as his own; Mr. Winder he did not suppose had read a book within the last ten years.

As, at that hour which sets the weary toiler free, in the gathering dusk Keyes stood on the curb amid the hurrying throng homeward bound, —oh! how he longed for that establishment in the eyes of men which the success of his story would bring him. Oh, when would he hear! As he bowled along in the crowded trolley the thought stole through him, until it amounted almost to a conviction, that the great letter awaited him at home now. He could hardly bear the tedium of the short journey. Restlessly he turned his evening paper.

In him had developed of late a great interest in authors; he peered between the pages, a little

sheepishly, at the column, "Books and Their Makers." He read that Mr. So and So, the author of "This and That," was a young man thirty years of age. Instantly he reflected that he himself was but twenty-seven. This was encouraging! He had formed a habit recently of contrasting at once any writer's age with his own. If he learned that Mr. Galsworthy, whose books were much advertised but which he had not read, was forty-something, he wanted to know how old he had been when he wrote his first book. Then he counted up the number of books between that time—comparing his age at that time with his own—and now. He was absorbed in the literary gossip of the day. That Myra Kelly had been a schoolteacher, that Gertrude Atherton lived in California, that Mr. Bennett had turned thirty before he published his first book, that such a writer was in Rome, or that some other one was engaged on a new work said to be about the Russian Jews,—he found very interesting. He read in his newspaper the publishers' declaration that Maurice Hewlett's new creation recalled Don Quixote, Cyrano, d'Artagnan, Falstaff, Bombastes Furioso, Tartarin, Gil Blas. His notions concerning the characters of this company were

somewhat vague; but he was stirred with an ambition to create some such character, too.

On leaving the car whom should he see but Dr. Nevens. They walked along together. Dr. Nevens inquired about the business. A bad year, he surmised, for trade. Trade! Keyes felt his heart thumping with the temptation to confide the adventures of his literary life; which, indeed, he had found exceedingly difficult to keep so much to himself. But his position gave him clairvoyance: he divined that no sort of ambition receives from people in general so little respect, by some curious idiosyncrasy of the human mind, as literary aspiration. With what coarse and withering scorn had an intimation—which had escaped him—that he had sought to give some artistic articulation to his ideas been met by Pimpkins the other day at the office!

The personality of Dr. Nevens, however, suggested a more sympathetic attitude, by reason of the dentist's cultivation. Dr. Nevens was spoken of as a "booklover." He had a "library"—it was, he implied, his bachelor foible—the cornerstone of which was a set of the Thistle edition of Stevenson that he had bought by subscription from an agent. (Keyes had thought it odd one day

that Dr. Nevens had not cut the leaves.) And "the doctor" was fond of speaking familiarly of Dickens, and gained much admiration by his often saying that he should like—had he time—to read through "Esmond" once every year. Here, Keyes felt, would be spiritual succor.

But Keyes quickly learned that he was quite in a different case from the author of "Esmond." Dr. Nevens was kind, but pitying.

"Only one out of hundreds, thousands," he said, "ever comes to anything."

It did not occur to him, Keyes thought, as within the range of remotest possibility that he, Keyes, *might* be one of these. Then came the doctor's reason.

"You do not know anything," he said paternally, "anything at all."

Keyes realized, with some bitterness, that this world is not an institution existing for the purpose of detecting and rewarding inner worth. He had known enough to write his story, he guessed. With some flare of rage, he felt that simply unsupported merit is rather frowned upon, as tending by comparison to cast others possibly not possessing so much of it somewhat into the shade. He had a savage thought that

when he was Dr. Nevens's age he would not be a country dentist. He saw the intense egoism of mankind.

Dr. Nevens was determined to show a young man who had betrayed a consciousness of superiority of grain, his place—economically and socially. The selfish jealousy of the world!

* * * * * * *

His letter had not come. There was only a package from Louise—a copy of "Book Talk," containing a marked article on "Representative American Story Tellers"; from this, after dinner, Keyes imbibed most of the purported facts about Booth Tarkington. Then he went to bed to sleep through the hours until the return of the postman.

The next evening still there was no letter. Keyes's spirit was troubled. He sought the solace of solitude in the quiet, shadowed streets. A reaction was succeeding his rosy complacency! Doubts pierced his dissolving confidence. Was his story so good, after all? Somehow, as he looked back at it now, it seemed much less strong than it had before. He felt a sort of sinking in his stomach. A sickening suspicion came to him

that, perhaps, it was absurd. Maybe it was very silly. In a disconnected way certain remarks and passages in it came back to him now as quite questionable. Yes, they sounded pretty maudlin. He squirmed within with mortification as a rceollection of these passages passed through his mind. He hoped his story would never get into print. A fear that it might nauseated him. Then he was suffused with a sensation of how little he amounted to. He felt, with a sense of great weakness, the precariousness of his job. A horror came over him that he might lose it. He wished he did not know Louise, who expected things of him. He felt how awkward it was so to fail her. In the position he had got himself into with her, how he had laid himself open to humiliating exposure! Oh, why had he ever sought her? He wished he did not know anybody well. He was an ass and he would never come to anything. He felt the futility of his life. Why could he not slink away somewhere and live out his feeble existence unobserved? As he got into bed he felt that very easily he could cry.

* * * * * * *

FAME

The August
FAVORITE MAGAZINE
This number contains
The Great Prize Story
by
BENJAMIN CECIL KEYES
GET IT!!

. . . Keyes stood before a downtown newsstand. Hurrying pedestrians bumped into him. An irascible character or two, thus impeded, glared back at him—what was the matter with the fellow! Did he think there was nobody but himself in the world?

B. C. Keyes walked home to the sound of a great orchestra reverberating through him. He could not tolerate the thought of subduing himself to the confinement of a car. He needed movement and air.

It had come, his great letter, a few weeks before. At his sitting down to dinner his mother had given him the envelope. *The Favorite Magazine*—these words had seemed to him to be printed in the upper left-hand corner; it had struck him that perhaps the strain on his nerves

of late had so deranged his mind that he now saw, as in a mirage, what was not. "Benjamin C. Keyes, Esq."—so ran the address. Keyes in his dizziness noted this point: people had not customarily addressed him as *esquire*. Then, for the first time in his life, he held in his hand a substantial check payable to his own name—wealth! Courteous and laudatory typewritten words danced before his burning eyes.

He felt, though in a degree an hundred times intensified, as though he had smoked so much tobacco, and drunk so much coffee, he could not compose himself to eat, or read a paper, or go to bed, or stay where he was; but must rush off somewhere else and talk hysterically. He got through his meal blindly. He could not explain —just yet—to his mother: he felt he could not control the patience necessary to begin at the beginning and construct a coherent narrative. . . . He must go to Louise who already understood the preliminary situation.

It had occurred to Keyes on his hurried, stumbling way thither that the whole thing was unbelievable, and that he must be quite insane. After he had pushed the bell, an interminable time seemed to elapse before his ring was an-

swered. As he stood there on the porch he felt his flesh palpitating. A terrible fear came over him that Louise might not be at home. . . . Louise said, when her frenzy had somewhat abated, that she had always known that he "had it in him." She told him there was now "a future" before him. . . . Keyes had determined to go on about his business as though nothing unusual had occurred; then when the story appeared, to accept congratulations with retiring modesty. Before noon the next day he had told three people; by night, seven.

So, going over it all again, Keyes arrived at home, to learn that—"What do you think?" His mother said "a reporter" had been at the house; an occurrence—quite unprecedented in Mrs. Keyes's experience—which had thrown her into considerable agitation. This public official she had associated in her confusion with a policeman. He had, however, treated her as a personage of great interest. He told her "there was nothing to be ashamed of." He drew from her trembling lips some account of her son's life, and requested a photograph.

Next day the dean of local newspapers, vigilant in patriotism, printed an extended article on

the "state's new writer." And in an editorial entitled "The Modern Athens" (which referred to Keyes only by implication) the paper affirmed again that Andiena was "by general consent the present chief centre of letters in America." It recapitulated the names of those of her sons and daughters whose works were on the counters of every department store in the land. It concluded by saying: "The hope of a people is in its writers, its chosen ones of lofty thought, its poets and prophets, who shall dream and sing for it, who shall gather up its tendencies and formulate its ideals and voice its spirit, proclaiming its duties and awakening its enthusiasm." Keyes read this, as he took it to be, moving and eloquent tribute to his prize story with feelings akin to those experienced, very probably, by Isaiah.

Keyes received an ovation at "the office." The humility of Pimpkins's admiration was abject. Keyes perceived the commanding quality of ambition—when successful. Miss Wimble, the hollow-breasted cashieress, regarded him with sheep's-eyes. Even Mr. Winder, in passing, congratulated him upon his "stroke of luck."

Wonders once begun, it seemed, poured. Two letters awaited him that evening. One from the

editor of *The Monocle Magazine. The Monocle Magazine,* as Louis said, "think of it!" The editor of this distinguished institution spoke of his "pleasure" in reading Mr. Keyes's "compelling" story; he begged to request the favor of the "offer" of some of Keyes's "other work." By way of a fraternal insinuation he mentioned that he was a native of Andiena, himself. "Most of us are," was his sportive comment. The "Consolidated Sunday Magazines, Inc.," wrote with much business directness to solicit "manuscript," at "immediate payment on acceptance at your regular rates for fiction of the first class."

* * * * * * *

The extraordinary turn of events in Keyes's life brought him visitors as well as letters. Dr. Nevens called, benignly smiling appreciation. His impression appeared to be that he had not been mistaken in giving Keyes his support. Of more constructive importance, however, was the turning up of Mr. Tate, who had been Keyes's instructor in "English" at the Longridge High School. A slender, pale, young man, with a bald, domed forehead "rising in its white mass like a tower of mind," Mr. Tate was understood to

nourish a deep respect for literature. He had contributed one or two very serious and painstaking "papers" on the English of Chaucer (not very well understood by Keyes at the time), to "Poet-Lore"; and had edited, with notes, several "texts"—one of "The Lady of the Lake," with an "introduction," for school use. He reverenced, he now made evident, the "creative gift," as he designated it; which, he realized, had been denied him. He had come to pay homage to a vessel of this gift, his former pupil, now illustrious.

With the hand of destiny Mr. Tate touched a vital chord. Self-assertion; to be no longer an unregarded atom in the mass of those born only to labor for others; to find play for the mind and the passion which, by no choice of his own, distinguished him from the time slave: this was now Keyes's smouldering thought. Mr. Tate, from his conversancy with the literary situation, reported that there never was in the history of the world such a demand for fiction as now, and that "the publishers" declared there was not an overproduction of good fiction. Editors, Mr. Tate said, were eager to welcome new talent. He strongly encouraged Keyes to adopt what he

spoke of as the "literary life." In fact, he seemed to consider that there was no alternative. And, indeed, already in Keyes's own idea of his future he saw himself eventually settled somewhere amid the Irvin-Cobbs, the Julian-Streets, the Joseph-Hergesheimers, and other clever people whose society would be congenial to him.

For the present he cultivated his ego, as became a literary light; and now, with Mr. Tate's assistance, he began to devote the time at his command to preparation for his life's work, to study. Mr. Tate was ardent to be of service; he felt that he had here connected himself with literary history in the making. The great need for Keyes, he felt, was education. The creative genius, Mr. Tate said, could not be implanted; but he felt that this other he could supply. He recommended the patient study of men and books. He thought that what Keyes needed in especial was "technical" knowledge; so he went at that strong. Maupassant, Mr. Tate said, was the great master of the short story. Keyes began his evening studies in English translations of Maupassant.

The galling yoke of his business life was becoming well-nigh unbearable. His soul was in

ferment. If only he did not have to get up to hurry every morning down to that penitentiary, there to waste his days, he could get something done. That sapped his vitals. And he was tortured by a flame—to do, to read, study, create, grow, accomplish! He was expanding against the walls of his environment. God! could he but burst them asunder, and leap out!

Mr. Tate had a high idea of a thing which he spoke of as "style." In elucidation of this theme he suggested perusal of essays and treatises by DeQuincey, Walter Pater, and Professor Raleigh. He felt also that the "art of fiction" should be mastered by his protégé. So Keyes pitched into examinations of this recondite subject by Sir Walter Besant, Marion Crawford, R. L. Stevenson, and Anthony Trollope. Keyes realized that he had *not* realized before what a lot there was *to* writing. Mr. Tate purchased out of his slender means as a present, "Success in Literature," by G. H. Lewes. He unearthed a rich collection in titles of books the consumption of which literature would be invaluable to one in training for the literary profession. An admirable bibliography, this list, of the genre which was Keyes's specialty:—"The Art of Short Story

Writing," "Practical Short Story Writing," "The Art of the Short Story," "The Short Story," "Book of the Short Story," "How to Write a Short Story," "Writing of the Short Story," "Short Story Writing," "Philosophy of the Short Story," "The Story-Teller's Art," "The Short Story in English," "Selections from the World's Greatest Short Stories," "American Short Stories," "Great English Short-Story Writers." In the reading room of the public library Keyes followed a series of articles in "Book Talk" on the "Craftsmanship of Writing." He advanced in literary culture, under Mr. Tate's zealous lead, to consideration of "the novel," *its* history and development. And, too, to the drama, its law and technique. His head was filled with the theory of dénouements, "moments," rising actions, climaxes, suspended actions, and catastrophes. At times he had an uneasy feeling that all these things did not much help him to think up any new stories of his own. But Mr. Tate said "that" would "come."

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And wealth and fame were even now at hand. The promoters of the great prize contest adver-

tising dodge had not been at fault in business acumen; the winning story returned ample evidence of its popular appeal. It was akin to the minds of the "peepul." *The Favorite Magazine* was sold during August by enterprising newsboys *on trolley cars.* That great public whose literature is exclusively contemporaneous, —whose world of letters is the current *Saturday Mail-Coach,* the *All-people's Magazine,* the *Purple Book,* the *Nothing-But-Stories,* the *Modiste, The Swift Set, Jones's—the Magazine that Entertains, Brisk Stories, Popularity,* and the *Tip-Top,*—discussed the big features on front porches. Keyes's story even attracted the interest of those *who seldom read anything.* A number of letters from persons of that impulsive class which communicates its inward feelings to authors personally unknown were forwarded to Keyes from his publishers. A young lady resident in St. Joe, Michigan, wrote to say that she thought the scene where the boat upsets was the *"grandest thing* ever written."

Imagine a man like Keyes sitting his days away on an office stool. His mother, however, could not "see" his resigning his position. His "father had always" . . . and so forth. Keyes

foamed within. What a thing—woman's maddening narrowness! At the office Keyes's situation grew, in subtle ways, more and more oppressive. His position appeared to become equivocal. Mr. Winder seemed to make a point of increasing exactness. Keyes felt a disposition in authority to put down any subordinate uppishness of feeling possibly occasioned by doings outside the line of business. And he became conscious, too, of a curious estrangement from his associates there. They, on their side, Pimpkins in especial, seemed to feel that he felt he was too good for them. And, in truth, he did. The mundane aims of those around him got on his nerves. Their commonplace thoughts irritated him. They were *common* natures. But, with fierce secret joy, Keyes knew that an event was approaching which promised, would command, deliverance from it all.

Fall came. And the Favorite Publishing Company bound up the prize story as a "gift book" for the holiday trade. Claud Clarence Chamberlain, the well-known illustrator and creator of the famous "Picture-Hat Girl," was commissioned to make the decorations. These were done with much dash in highly colored crayon

and popular sentiment. One was printed on the paper jacket of the book, with the title in embossed letters. The advertisement pronounced the work altogether "an exquisite piece of book-making." It declared the production the "daintiest gift of the season," and reminded "people of culture and refinement" that there was "no present like a book."

Indeed a hero is not without fame in his own country. The Stanton-Merritt bookstore on Capital Street arranged a window display of about a ton of "Will Rockwell Makes Good," with one of Mr. Chamberlain's original illustrations, framed, in the centre. A monster advertising banner was flung across the front of the store above the entrance and windows. Just inside, a pyramid breast-high was built of the books, beneath an artistic piece of work—a hanging board upon which was burned in old English letters: " 'A good book is the precious life blood of a Master Spirit'—Milton." A lady who informed the salesman that she thought "books" were "just fine," bought twenty copies for holiday distribution. She inquired if there was not a discount on that number purchased.

Drugged with triumph, they returned together

Saturday night from the exhibition "down town"; and, in the now historic little parlor again, Louise wept upon the shoulder of her affianced. Yes; they were formally engaged. Keyes was not without a sensation that the situation was rather chaotic. But destiny seemed to close in on him and bear him on.

The reviewers got on the job. And they were there with the goods. Statements from a few typical press notices follow. "An absorbing story," said the Topeka *Progressive,* "throbbing with optimism." "Mr. Keyes strikes a new note in this unusual production; vivid, dramatic," —San Francisco *Lookout.* "A story of vivid and compelling interest," one critic declared. "A delightful story, rich in heart throbs," was one good one. One reviewer said, "Here we have a real love story, a tale of love, tender and true, delightfully narrated. There are so many fine, tender passages in the episode of these two, who live just for each other, that reading the little book is like breathing strong, refreshing air." "The creator of 'Will Rockwell,' said one paper, "has here written a new idyl of America." "An inspiring picture," said another. One very fine critique said: "Once in awhile, possibly once in

a lifetime, there arises before us a writer of fiction whose genius is undeniable the instant it greets us." When Keyes read this, quoted in his publisher's latest newspaper advertisement, he knew that he had found his work in the world. And reasoning from his experience, he saw before him a calling that would be ever a noble intoxication of the soul, a kind that would know naught of headaches or remorse.

But perhaps the best of all the critical dicta was this: "Written," it declared, "with blood and tears and fire." Very impressive was the number of times that were used such adjectives as "big," "vital," "absorbing," "compelling," "remarkable," "insistent," and "virile." "Optimism," it developed too, was the supreme merit of fiction. One of the arresting terms employed was "economy of means."

There were, it is true, a few dissenting voices from the chorus of unrestrained praise, chiefly from certain notoriously dull, conservative, killjoy journals. The New York *Evening Postman* said: "This somewhat amateurish little essay in fiction seems to be the product of an untutored sincerity. In this, its sincerity, it is not without a degree of vigor. We doubt, however,

whether the author can repeat the performance." And that irrepressibly ribald organ, the New York *Beam,* could not forbear its customary jocular sport. Its smart review of this little classic (as one bookseller already pronounced it) began: "Hooray for 'Will'! Hooray also for 'Mabel'! They are the real simegoozlia."

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"Don't you think you could write something now, dear?" inquired Mrs. Keyes, who did not see how scholarship pure and simple was, so to say, to move the boat.

This idea of writing something now had indeed occurred to Keyes; but somehow he had not been able to think of anything in particular to write. So he went on with his studies, at the same time keeping an eye open for available material, characters, and plots.

"Surely you can write something, Ben, that we could get some money for," said Louise. A wife, after all, is only a woman, with a mind fitted to petty things, such as groceries, family washings, clothing, and divers household bills. It is irritating to a man of lofty mind who night and day is racking his brain for an idea, to be prodded

on in this fashion. Keyes ground his teeth and bore it; he reflected that an author's life is frequently a battle with mediocrity. Perhaps he was mistaken as to where lay the mediocrity with which he battled.

He fretted and worried and at length sat himself down to write without an inspiration. He bethought himself of Trollope's example to literary aspirants, and tried to grind out two hundred and fifty words every fifteen minutes for three hours a day. He couldn't write twenty. He kept doggedly on. He could not make his characters act or talk—the talk was the most hopeless thing of all. He couldn't, as once he had done, cry over them. Sometimes, in the stillness of the night with his clock ticking before him, he almost thought that he had regained for a moment a tithe of the power he once had; but in the morning when he reviewed his work he admitted that he had been sadly mistaken. Now doubts haunted his soul; even as he wrote another consciousness within not thus employed whispered of his impotency. Fact is, Keyes had not at all the creative gift.

He struggled through a number of stories, some better and some worse. When he mailed

these it was with a faltering, doubting heart. Something with a weak action away in his interior told him that they would not be accepted.

Keyes got thinner in flesh, more distressed in spirit, and poorer in this world's goods as time went on. Sometimes he felt like an imposter and was ashamed to face his wife; then he reread his press notices and a fever to do something shook him. But a man cannot support himself and his wife on a fever to do something. Benjamin Cecil Keyes could not understand the thing: if he had literary genius why couldn't he write? If he had not, how then had he written? To sit in full view of one's wife day after day pretending to be interested in a book when the bill-collector calls; and to be tormented all the time by a desire to do something and not to be able to do it, or know when, if ever, one will be able; and to be ashamed and afraid to tell one's wife this; but to be compelled to be there, or to run away, or to hang one's self—this is a situation more than uncomfortable.

A thousand times Keyes decided to roll up his sleeves and do something else—engage in any profitable employment; and a thousand times he decided not to—just yet. A man often exists in

this way until he gets quite to the end of the string where the wolf is.

"That was an accident, Louise," said Keyes sadly one day. "I find I can't write."

Keyes was mistaken again. No fine thing ever was made by accident. Keyes managed to write that story because its theme was the most interesting incident in his life; because it appealed to him more strongly than anything else had in his whole experience; because he was thoroughly familiar with the life and the people he featured in his story; because he was absolutely sincere in his sympathies, appreciation, and emotions here; he had no ideals set way beyond his power, no aping tendencies after an effective style, no attention distracted by an ill-digested knowledge of mechanical construction. The structure, and the style simply came, probably because—and finally he managed to write that story because—he was keyed up to it.

A domestic woman often has a wretchedly unworshipful view of art and fame. Keyes's confession did not kill Louise. I suppose he expected her to go back to her parents in high dudgeon as one who had been grossly swindled.

"Do you care if you can't write?" she said, after

a moment's silence. "Just think how nice you are—how much nicer you were before you tried to write! And how it has worried you!"

Keyes got a job as a collector for a mercantile house. "My health demands outdoor employment," he told his acquaintances.

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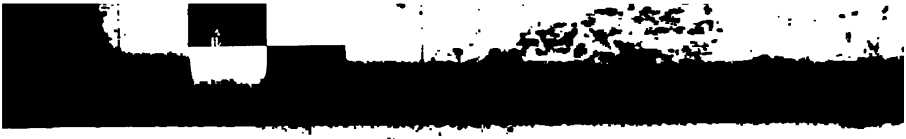
Sometimes, alone with his lamp after the day's confounded drudgery, Keyes got out the old magazine and reread his forgotten story.

THE END.